

ALFRED LYTTLETON  
AN ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE











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*Alfred Lyttelton*

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# ALFRED LYTTTELTON

AN ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE

BY

EDITH LYTTTELTON



WITH PHOTOGRAVURE FRONTISPIECE  
AND OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

*SECOND IMPRESSION*

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.  
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON  
FOURTH AVENUE & 30TH STREET, NEW YORK  
BOMBAY, CALCUTTA AND MADRAS

1917





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PART I





## PREFACE

ADDRESS BY THE RIGHT HON. ARTHUR JAMES  
BALFOUR, M.P., AT THE UNVEILING OF THE  
MEMORIAL TABLET TO ALFRED LYTTTELTON IN ST.  
MARGARET'S CHURCH, WESTMINSTER, ON AUGUST  
THE 1ST, 1916.

I HAVE been asked, as one of Alfred Lyttelton's oldest friends, to say a few words on this occasion. Many memorials have been erected in this Church to those who, in their day, have gained the warm regard of their colleagues in Parliament: but never perhaps have those colleagues assembled at the ceremony of unveiling with quite the same feelings of intimate personal affection for their departed friend as move us at the present moment.

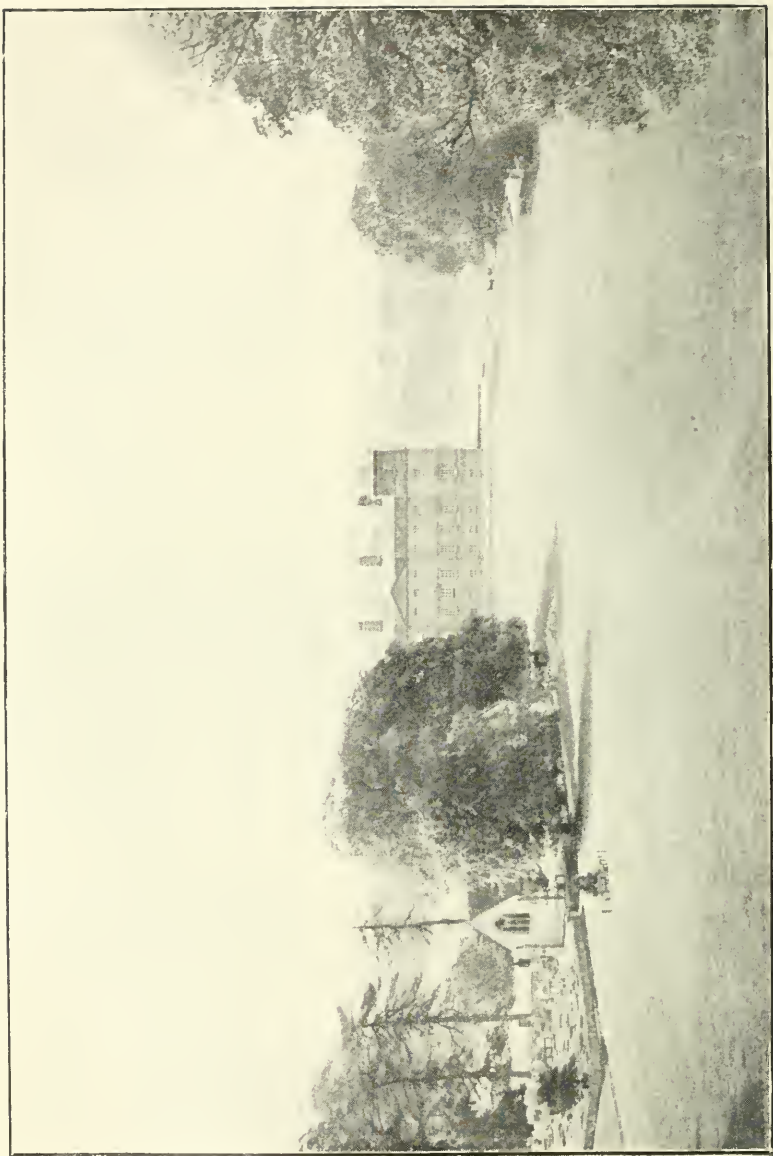
I will not attempt any analysis of the unique charm which makes the life of Alfred Lyttelton irreplaceable. Such an attempt would indeed be vain. We can neither separate the whole into its parts, nor recompose the parts into the whole. There was that about him which made immediate and irresistible appeal to every man and woman whom he met, and made that appeal to what was best in them. This characteristic, which was true to the hour of his death, belonged to him through all his life. We have all had friends of whom one had to say that the man has not kept the promise of the boy, that darkening clouds gathered over middle and later life, that charm vanished with youth, and the declining day did not keep the promise of the morning. But Alfred Lyttelton's irresistible claim on our

affections depended on something other than high health and high spirits ; it was not touched by years, nor weakened by care or sorrow ; for it rose from the deepest springs of his moral nature.

Gaiety of spirit, humorous perception, delight in all things that were lovely and of good report, he possessed in unique measure ; and these qualities made him the most charming of playfellows. But none who knew him well ever lost the consciousness that his joy in life, and all that life can give, was more than mere gaiety of temper. It was, in truth, the fair flower of a pure character drawing its beauty from profound spiritual roots.

It is just three years since, to our unending loss, he was taken from among us ; and of those three years two have been spent in the tremendous struggle which has absorbed all our thoughts and called forth all our efforts. Much of what happened before August 1914 seems ancient history, lost in some illimitable past, scarcely worth recalling in these strenuous and tragic days. But among those half-forgotten things must not be counted the memory of Alfred Lyttelton. To our great sorrow he was taken from us before the mighty struggle began ; but though we cannot profit by the personal service which he would have so lavishly expended in the hour of his country's need, I feel his spirit still among us, animating us, as of old, with something of his own high and cheerful courage.





HAGLEY HALL

## CHAPTER I

### HAGLEY

1857-1868

Verily I think,  
Such place to me is sometimes like a dream  
Or map of the whole world ; thoughts, link by link,  
Enter through ears and eyesight, with such gleam  
Of all things, that at last in fear I shrink  
And leap at once from the delicious stream.

WORDSWORTH.

HAGLEY HALL, the Worcestershire home of the Lyttelton family, is a large square sandstone building with low towers at each corner, about two and a half miles from Stourbridge and eleven from Birmingham. The living rooms are all on the first floor, and the hall opens on to a wide perron, with steps leading down on either side to the gravelled square in front of the house.

A much older house, Frankley, a few miles away, was burned down in the Rebellion, to keep the Roundheads out of it. The family home then became an old timbered house standing on what is now the cricket ground ; but George, Lord Lyttelton, the first baron, friend of Pope, brother-in-law to Chatham, and himself a poet, influenced by eighteenth-century ideas, built the present great pile in a fine park. He filled it with Chippendale furniture, collected pictures and tapestry, and added to the library he already possessed. He made a stately

and dignified house with well-proportioned rooms opening out of each other. There is a long gallery hung with gilt-framed mirrors, and candle brackets designed and carved by Chippendale, a library with white carved bookcases, and other rooms hung with family portraits and some good tapestry.

The old parish church—now mostly rebuilt—close to which the house was placed, stands among the trees of the park not five minutes' walk away, and played a great part in the daily life. That it should be much nearer the house than the gardens was appropriate enough: a friend might say with a smile that this was true also of the cricket ground. It was indeed so near to the church that the north windows had to be protected from the balls by a wire netting. The garden, with green swards, stone vases, and white benches, belongs also to the eighteenth century; the park is dotted with temples and vases, a famous seat on which the poet Thomson used to sit, and the correct ruined castle half-way up Clent hill. Behind lies a stretch of wild desolate country, a little blackened by the great coal mines between Stourbridge and Birmingham, while to the south the fair Midland country spreads itself out till it reaches the Welsh hills. A spacious and generous land, with fertile plains and bold hills, with streams and trees and leafy lanes, leading up to wild moors: a land of contrasts.

Such was the home into which Alfred Lyttelton, the youngest of twelve, the eighth son of George, fourth Lord Lyttelton, was born on the 7th of February 1857. His mother was a daughter of Sir Stephen



Glynne, the Squire of Hawarden Castle in Flintshire. She and her sister Catherine, most devoted of friends, married on the same day two other great friends, George Lyttelton and William Gladstone. This double friendship was continued all through their lives, and the families constantly interchanged visits. Lord Lyttelton was a man of rare attainments; his nature, like the country that bred him, was full of sharp contrasts—vigorous—tempestuous—devout and tender. His son Edward writes of him that—

He gave his children the abiding impression of a strong righteous man incessantly busied in useful works for others, rough and awkward in manner but deeply solicitous for our true welfare: of commanding intellect and astonishing accuracy of memory, but totally ignorant of and indifferent to any subject that did not appeal to him, apparently careless about money, but a scrupulous keeper of accounts, painstaking in estate management, but unthrifty by inclination and impatient of the time and trouble required for successful investment; generous in giving beyond the limits of prudence; desirous of intellectual effort in his children, but incapable of the patience and intellectual sympathy of a teacher; a grand classical scholar of the old Cambridge type, yet deeply abhorrent of all subtleties of thought, philosophy, speculation and analysis; a first-rate platform speaker, but difficult to hear owing to a rapid and careless articulation; from tender-heartedness and interest in other people a writer of thousands of letters in a handwriting hardly decipherable; averse from anything that smacked of gossip but marvellously tenacious of the facts of other people's lives; finally he was deeply and simply religious, but possessed often by a mercurial roguish spirit of fun which broke out in the most unexpected moments.

His daughter Meriel, Mrs. John Talbot, completes

the picture by describing the rigour of his self-discipline.

I never remember his saying he was tired or 'what a bore' when some wearisome person wanted to speak to him, or delaying one single moment getting up to go to some meeting : and yet he was naturally very indolent, and often said the men he envied were those lying in the sun on the grass in St. James's Park with their hats over their faces.

After a long day at Worcester or Birmingham he would put on goloshes and go to evening service if there was one. When he gave up teaching in the Sunday School after thirty years, we found for the first time that he had always hated it. We often went to Brighton for a month or two, and the first thing he did (after arranging his writing-table and a waste-paper basket exactly as at home) was to find out a church with a daily service, a place where he could play billiards, and an old woman to read to. (I wonder what she thought of him and his odd rapid reading.)

Alfred's mother was a lovely woman of a great gentleness of temperament, and possessed of judgment combined with courage. She shared with her sister, Mrs. Gladstone, an unconquerable sense of fun, never damped even by the long task of bearing her husband twelve children, a process which gradually sapped her vitality, and finally exhausted her. The sisters had a vocabulary all their own, racy and individual, and their comments on passing events expressed in these original terms were a constant amusement both to Lord Lyttelton and Mr. Gladstone. Lord Lyttelton actually compiled a dictionary called the 'Glynnese Glossary,' full of humour and throwing many a sidelight on the family life. Some of their expressions passed into an extended family currency, some into an even

wider one. 'Sitting tight' for an event is an example, as was also 'mawkin' for an unknown person whose arrival was incongruous, or the word 'wizzy' applied to some one sallow and shrunken, or 'moth' for an old lady short, faded, and dowdy.<sup>1</sup>

Up to the very end of her life, when she was weak and ill, Lady Lyttelton retained her power of kindly rule and racy comment; almost the last words she spoke were a request in the Glynnese dialect that those round her should not all tire themselves by 'sitting tight' for her death.

Six months after Alfred was born she died, and it seemed to those who watched his radiant babyhood, as if she had dowered her last child with all the grace and charm of her nature.

From the beginning he showed the quality, which perhaps characterised him more than any other throughout his life, an infectious joyousness. His was not only the physical exhilaration of life, common enough in youth; his joyousness sprang from the delight of a loving heart. His sister Lucy (afterwards Lady Frederick Cavendish) kept a journal full of little references to the baby, and nearly all speak of his charm. August the 7th, 1861, when he was four: 'His bright generous

<sup>1</sup> One or two of Lord Lyttelton's comments may be quoted because the words will crop up in Alfred's letters:—'to let down one's leg,' as to which he says, 'It is held by the Glynnese that a wounded bird flies with one of its legs dangling: from whence follows the masterly generalisation that to let down one's leg means to moan, or to make the worst of oneself in illness—to be sorry for oneself. Lady Lyttelton receiving a tolerably cheerful letter from X—who is rather given that way—Lady Lyttelton said 'she only tries to let down her leg in the middle of the letter once.' 'Groutle and hydra' meant rubbish left in drawers; 'to have the cares of a thing' meant being anxious and uneasy—and so on.

temper, his amazing winsomeness, his quickness and noble looks'; and much later, on his fourteenth birthday: 'He is wonderfully nice and dear, only too perfect in disposition—the sunbeam that he always was, without a cloud.'

Among the letters from his sons kept by Lord Lyttelton is a funny little scrawl endorsed by himself, 'Alfred, 13th July 1859.' Alfred, aged two and a half, and several brothers and sisters, had evidently been left at home in charge of their grandmother, Lady Lyttelton, who came to live with her son after his bereavement. But the little boy wants the rest of his family, so the nurse 'Newmany,' who brought up the whole tribe, guides his small fist and the letter runs:

MY DEAR PAPA,—I write a letter, I've got a horse, Edward's got a horse for his birthday—May and Mif's<sup>1</sup> laughing. Come back Papa, come back Lucy, come back Meriel. Good-bye Papa, your dutiful son                      ALFRED.

The last sentence is obviously prompted by the nurse, but the eager appeal to each one by name is surely characteristic. His father actually writes a letter in return:

HAWARDEN, 25th July 1859.

DEAR LITTLE ALFRED,—What a clever little pig you must be to write such a funny letter. I want to see you very much. I shall keep your letter for you to see when you are a big boy.—Yr. Aff:                      LYTTTELTON.

From babyhood his greatest friend and companion was, of course, the brother next him in age—Edward; they shared everything and were inseparable. Their cousin, Mary Gladstone, afterwards

<sup>1</sup> Miss Smith, her governess.

Mrs. Drew, says that she asked Alfred during his first school holidays who was his greatest friend. 'Borrow,' he answered gruffly. She then said, 'But who is Edward's?' He gave a rapid look up at her of surprise, 'Why, Borrow, of course.' 'We've got a cold,' was a common form with either of the boys. All through their school and college days they ran together, and though life parted their ways the love between them was never dimmed. Bob, being the elder brother next to them, was always their immediate chief, while Charles, the superb cricketer, and Albert and Neville, the next in age, ruled over the rest—Spencer, Arthur, Bob, Edward, and Alfred.

But Alfred's sister Lucy, in whose charge his mother left him, was the great moulding influence of his youth. As long as she remained at home, and she did not marry Lord Frederick Cavendish till Alfred had touched seven, she was everything to him; he owed to her influence, continued long after she had gone to a home of her own, much of the strength and steadfastness of his character, and she fostered in him also a reverence for all things connected with religion.

All through his life, intercourse with his sisters Meriel, Lucy, and Lavinia was a constant delight to him, and, if she had lived, May, with her conquering charm and passionate temperament, perhaps the most akin to him of the four, would have been one of his closest friends.

Edward Lyttelton, in a privately printed memoir of his brother, gives a graphic account of some



members of the home circle which must be quoted here :

Lady Lyttelton, our grandmother, whose letters have been a delight to many, was to us a stately benevolent figure full of kindness and dignified humour, and of steadfast old-fashioned piety. Alfred was a young schoolboy when she died, full of memories, and alert-minded almost to the last ; but even to the youngest of us her influence was civilizing and elevating always. I remember her reading the Bible to us on Sundays but hesitating as to the Book of Esther being too secular, and better fitted for a week-day. We overruled her objection and enjoyed the story hugely as she was a fine reader. We also were bidden to admire her choice French accent. I think it was a French lesson we used to do with her for half an hour about 7 P.M. In summer and by way of a summons from the cricket ground where the village club were practising, she used to spread out a sheet of the *Times* from her window, and the signal, odd to say, was sufficient. But Granny gave significance to this trifle by telling us that our punctuality gave her real pleasure. Her death in 1870 deprived us of a fine example of a gracious tranquil cultivated nature, the most venerable thing on our horizon at that time.

Alfred used to relate of her that she was conscious of a certain flabbiness of nose which she declared she had introduced into the Lyttelton family from the Spencers. Looking down the long row of descendants at luncheon, she would say with a mock sigh, 'To think that I am responsible for all those profiles !'

Edward describes also the old nurse Newman, his sisters Lucy, Meriel, and Lavinia, and then the Rector of Hagley, Uncle Billy :

He is to be thought of not so much as an Uncle as the



favourite brother of my father, some of whose marked characteristics he reproduced. Both had big powerful voices and an indescribable blend of spirituality and boyishness, but whereas the elder brother was a learned and accurate scholar, Uncle Billy was but a sciolist in several subjects and neither deep nor lucid as a thinker : but of versatile intellectual interests, fine imagination, and a great lover of poetry. He was a dabbler in Science, something of a theologian, of broad Catholic tone of mind, a friend of Kingsley, a sympathizer with Maurice, a lover of Temple, Carlyle, Wordsworth, Ruskin, and Dean Boyle of Salisbury. But more than all he had a sense of humour, which, combined with, and indeed springing from his deep spirituality, gave him a power of investing the most trivial incidents with a broad halo of incongruity. He would wrap the joke round him as it were, fondling it, and turning it over and over to make sure he had it from every possible aspect, and meantime his laughter was eloquent of a whole volume of merriment surging up from the depths of his being : when in the middle of a paroxysm, and apparently overwhelmed by it, he would suddenly stop just sufficiently to utter a delicious racy comment from the most lofty and universal point of view. During these rich episodes he was sunk in the humour of the thing : generally an incident of the most trivial sort which he sublimated and transfigured by his fun ; and meantime all life's problems had disappeared from his horizon ; nothing was of any consequence to him but the irresistible comicality of the event, and while he went on exhibiting in his own unique fashion, all of those present were seized with such laughter as soon became painful, but was quite impossible to stop.

In this delicious foolery my father was a most appreciative partner. We came in once to the dining-room and the two elderly gentlemen were sitting at the table alone, and at first we thought they were asleep. There was a silence in the room and both heads were thrown so far back that we could not see the faces. But after a few seconds a gurgle deep down the throat was audible, and out came some

delicious nonsensical corollary to a joke which had convulsed them.

But of all unique whimsicalities nothing was so purely indigenous and singular as the napkin fights. When Uncle Billy was dining at the Hall and the ladies had retired to the drawing-room, the conversation would continue for a good time with its usual mixture of drollery and real seriousness. On one occasion sitting next my father was Archer Clive, a small man of fragile build and rare brain power, who had been talking to him on some profound question of public interest and was in the middle of a sentence, when the Peer as we called him, without a word of warning, flung his napkin hard into the face of the nearest son, uttering a loud roar. This was the invariable signal. Some of us younger ones had been secretly rolling up our napkins into balls, ready for the fray should it break forth. Often of course nothing happened, but on this occasion the instantaneous result was an answering bellow from all of our throats, and the whole party ran stamping round the room shouting, while some six or seven cricketers, all powerful throwers, were ranged in a sadly unequal combat against their father and uncle. These were always the sides ; but I have no idea when or how the first fight began. But poor Archer, who found himself in the very middle of an interesting talk on Local Taxation or recent Histories of Greece, suddenly plunged into Pandemonium, discreetly evaded the Comus rout by slipping through the throng and clambering for safety on to the sideboard, just under the picture full length of an ancestor, Judge Lyttelton. Here he stood in safety for several minutes while the tumult continued, and was heard to repeat the words, ' Goodness gracious me ! '

The end came when the elders, hot, dishevelled, and out of breath, flung themselves forth into the hall, followed by casual napkins, and crossing over to the Library sat down to read ponderous volumes as if nothing had happened.

Now why is it needful to recount this strange gamesomeness in the elder generation ? Simply because through it there was one priceless lesson taught to us all, namely, that

it was possible to be a devout Christian and a devoted public servant without the slightest tinge of austerity, heaviness of demeanour, or gloom of spirits ; indeed the picture presented to us was the combination of deep piety, massive learning, incessant industry, and rollicking boyish fun.

The Peer was fond of writing doggerel verses on trivial domestic incidents ; they were redolent of classical learning and humour, and it is reported that when he was composing them in a train, if he was not alone in the carriage he would have to lean his head out of the window roaring with laughter at his own jokes. Yet this was the man whose single reported saying after my mother died, in 1857, acted like a powerful moral tonic upon us all. Our elder sisters told us how, when bowed down with grief in the darkest hour of his bereavement, he said, ' This is the worst blow that could have befallen me, except one of the boys going to the bad.'

No one will ever measure the full amount of good those few words did : spoken as they were at one of the most sacred moments in the speaker's life and with the weight of all his moral power behind them.

In addition to all this my father instituted very short Bible lessons before morning prayers. These were frequently interrupted and we often shirked. But they helped to make us see things in a certain proportion, and teaching which effects so much with boys of thirteen is not a failure. Family prayers were of course regular. He used to read some printed notes of his own on the Gospels and Acts, and once read a fine address to the household on the sudden death of one of their number.

Large families were more common in those days than they are now, but even at that time the Hagley brood, from its size, noisy spirits, and vigorous games, must have been rather unusual. From their earliest days cricket was the great pursuit ; the elder ones taught the younger, and cricket matches against

neighbouring teams were arranged, many taking place on the home cricket ground. On one occasion there was an eleven entirely composed of Lytteltons ; the eight sons, their father and the two uncles, Billy and Spencer, all taking part. Edward declares the influence of cricket in their lives at this time was immense.

There is no need to hesitate as to the use of this adjective. The main message openly and plainly delivered by the elder brothers to us was cricket. It loomed large before us in imagination ; as an actual present fact there were their exploits for us to hear of and in part to witness on the Hagley cricket ground. From 1860 onwards, the Eton and Harrow match at Lord's became to us the greatest day of the year, long before we were for the first time spectators of the combat in 1868. The heroes of the Harrow side, Stow, W. B. Money and others, were the terrors of our nursery, and in spite of temporary and transient distractions such as shooting and riding, it was to cricket that we felt ourselves really devoted in view of the distant day when we should take vengeance for the disastrous matches of 1865, 1866 and 1868. There was also a special halo given to the whole subject by the spectacle of my eldest brother's batting on the Hagley ground. Not only was our patriotism appealed to, not only did we feel in ourselves the growth of a natural gift and all that that means of pleasure, emulation and applause, but there was also the satisfaction of an æsthetic faculty in the sight of so much gracefulness and power combined. We felt ourselves called to ' deeds of high emprise ' in this department of life : and I fear the summons was more definitely given, or anyhow more decisively responded to in the matter of cricket and other games of ball, than to intellectual or other achievement in those early days.'

Alfred at the age of four received his first lesson in batting from his brother Edward in the nursery





ALFRED

Aged  $3\frac{1}{2}$

AND

EDWARD

Aged 5

1860



passage, the ball, of wash leather stuffed with bran, the bat, a big paper-knife. One can fancy the wide passage and the two little boys, for Edward was only a year and a half older, addressing themselves to this important task. Cricket was often played in the house; indeed some of the lovely Chippendale tables and chairs bore witness to the rough treatment they received when they were used on wet days as stumps, or acted as nets when the ball was vigorously hit by a small boy, perhaps at that time promoted to something more formidable than a paper-knife.

There was rough shooting and riding for them; sometimes, too, drives with their father on his way to one of his innumerable county duties. Alfred often described the appearance of the old gig, all dented and battered by stones, because Lord Lyttelton never could resist lightly flicking with a whip any one he met or passed. The joke was not always appreciated, and the victim would sometimes descend from his cart or carriage and hurl stones after him—so that a crouched back and huddled neck was a common attitude for any one driving with the Peer.

A good deal of music was cultivated at home; all the boys were fond of singing in parts with their sisters, and one or two of them played the piano.

Mrs. Drew writes of Edward and Alfred as little boys :

I can see them now in petticoats playing their duet at a crowded concert at Hawarden in the boys' school, rapturously encored. We feared they would be upset, but not a bit of it; they came forward, made low bows, went back, and stolidly played through the duet a second time.

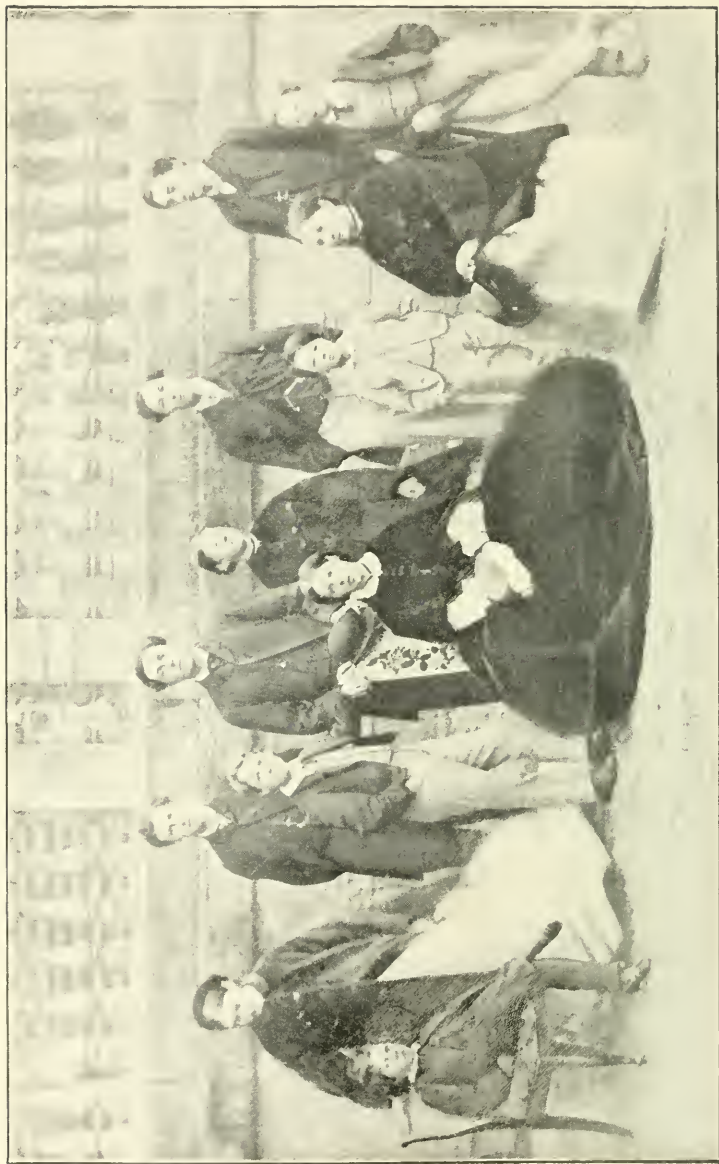


Books also were much read ; there was hardly one of them who did not look upon reading as among the great pleasures of the day.

Alfred often spoke of the delight which visits to Hagley from their beautiful cousin, Gertrude Glynne, afterwards Lady Penrhyn, gave them. She volunteered to teach her young barbarian cousins to dance, but she did not succeed very well—entirely, Alfred always declared, because she did not stay long enough. But she left with him an unfading memory of her loveliness. Mary Gladstone was the cousin most famous in the family for her conversational powers. Alfred while still a schoolboy was asked once which he would rather sit next to, Mary or Gertrude. He answered with instantaneous and very characteristic diplomacy, ‘ Oh ! next Mary and opposite Gertrude.’

In 1865 Edward and Alfred, in charge of their elder brother Bob, went to a preparatory school in Brighton. Alfred was then eight years old, an age nowadays when boys are hardly out of the nursery. He did not store very happy memories of his two and a half years spent at this establishment, nor does it seem that any of them learned much, Latin being badly taught, and Greek hardly at all, although classics were to be the chief part of the supposed instruction. Edward says : ‘ We made a few friends, picked up a few part songs, and gained some useful experience of cricket on a rough pitch . . . the only accurate information we carried away to Eton was the exact position of certain accessible “ grub ” shops, which I remember to the present day.’





Alfred Lucy

Neville Arthur

Charles

Meriel May

Spencer Edward

Lavinia Albert

Robert

CHILDREN OF LORD LYTTELTON, 1863

Even in 1866 Alfred was a formidable cricketer. A friend, St. John Brodrick, now Lord Midleton, who as a small boy of nine had just gone to a neighbouring rival school at Brighton ('Maldens'), used to chaff him on a match played in May 1866 between the second elevens of the two schools. '“Maldens,” to the horror of the neophyte, had included two of their first eleven in their second, in order to secure the honour of the school. When, however, the boys arrived on the rival ground they found their opponents had run up over 100 runs, chiefly by the determined hitting of a curly-headed member of *their* first eleven, who made 57 not out, and was known to be the best bat in the school. Alfred revelled in the fraud.'

But Alfred's real career as a schoolboy began when he went to Eton in January 1868, a period which must have a chapter to itself.

A year after this event Lord Lyttelton married again, Sybella Clive, widow of Humphrey Mildmay, who brought with her into the home several new interests and sympathies. Edward, for instance, says: 'We became at once aware that there were such things as flowers, though it would have taken many stepmothers to have taught us their names. Never,' he continues, 'did any newcomer into a large family identify herself more completely with her surroundings or more unreservedly lavish her resources in making us happy.'

She claimed a certain measure of deference and chivalry from those about her, and did it with success, because she gave in return warm and

overflowing love. It was characteristic of Alfred that from the first, when he was only twelve, he recognised the value of this new influence, and welcomed it. Sybella took him to her heart in a special way; he was like her own son, and down to the day she died they were intimate friends. Alfred was able to comfort her in the great sorrow of her life, and help her through many small worries, in return for the love which she gave him.

## CHAPTER II

### ETON

1868-1875

Best trust the happy moments. What they gave  
Makes man less fearful of the certain grave,  
And gives his work compassion and new eyes.  
The days that make us happy make us wise.

J. MASEFIELD.

It was Lord Lyttelton's custom, when his boys, one by one, plunged into the whirlpool of public-school life, to write them a letter on the temptations of growing manhood.

Among some family papers there exists a draft of this letter, not addressed to any son in particular, but evidently the model from which each was drawn.

It is fine and robust in tone, and at the same time so obviously written by a man who understands the temptations against which he warns his sons, that a few extracts would seem a fitting introduction to this chapter.

After some preliminary words, Lord Lyttelton continues :

I write rather than speak, because from the nature of the subject you might be embarrassed by being spoken to about it, and also because I shall be glad that you should have this letter by you to keep and remember.

I do not mean to go into a general lecture on this matter. You cannot doubt the great sinfulness of it, and among particular motives in your case to avoid all sin, I need only mention the memory and thought of your blessed mother

—what happiness it would have been, perhaps may still be, to her, to see you leading a pure and virtuous life, and in this particular respect more than any other.

On the sin itself I shall only mention one point which may not always be considered. Whatever some may think of it in the *man*, no one denies its enormity in the *woman*. No one could bear to think of any woman in whom he was interested losing her character. But then it is plain no *man* can act in this way without being a partaker of the woman's sin. You may sometimes hear from vicious and profligate men, that there can be no sin because it is simply unavoidable. Now I wish to assure you in the strongest way that this is not so : it is a delusion of the Devil to destroy souls. There are greater and lesser temptations of all sorts in this life : and greater and lesser differently to different people. But this particular temptation can be resisted by any one, like all others. I should not say this, if I did not know it by my own experience. I dare say I had as strong passions as any one else : but I never fell into vice, not once, nor did it ever occur to me as a question of *possibility* at all. As a safeguard against this sin, besides the religious ones, which apply to all sin and which you well know, I will mention two. One is constant occupation of mind or body or both. . . . Both the above are important : but of anything I believe that occupation of the mind is the most so. But plenty of healthy exercise, and temperate habits, so as to go to bed rather tired and likely to sleep quietly is of great use. The other aid is the prospect of marriage. On this at present I shall only say that while I shall leave you free to marry or not as you please, I shall be ready to give you all the facilities I can to marry, and that though in a worldly point of view there are of course some marriages better than others, I shall never refuse my consent to your marrying any one for whom you have a real affection and who is of good character and not wholly unsuitable in rank.

I do not wish you to acknowledge this letter or ever to say anything to me about having received it : though on this as on every subject you know I am always glad when



you like to speak to me, according to your own feelings. But you will be sure to keep this letter.

These exact words probably were never sent, but something like them, adapted to each son. Coming from a man so habitually reserved they made a profound impression on each one. More need not be said, than that the tradition was carried on.

Alfred and his brother Edward arrived at Eton in January 1868, conscious of a reputation already established by the six elder brothers, not only for clean living and honourable conduct, but by one or two of them for splendid athletics. Charles the eldest had won a name for himself all over England as a cricketer who played in a supremely beautiful style, but had already, in this same year, decided to retire from cricket at the call of politics. 'This step,' comments Edward, 'was approved of, though with deep regret, by our elders, and we accordingly accepted the verdict as sound, though only feebly grasping the principle which it assumed.'

Edward and Alfred were determined not to fall short. Edward writes: 'On arriving at Eton, aged 12 and 11, I well remember noticing that "My Dame's" was almost without any silver cups for prowess in games: and we registered a resolve, that that tarnish on the scutcheon of the house should be wiped off before we left; and it was.'

The boys were sent to 'Evans's,' the house afterwards ruled over by Miss Evans, the last, as she was the most famous, of the Eton Dames. In the old rambling place with its odd-shaped little rooms, its dark staircase, its windows giving



on to the narrow street called Keate's Lane, were spent seven of the happiest years in Alfred's life. He entered with unfailing zest into all the adventure, as well as the business of school life. Never was a boy born more absolutely fitted to enjoy and to profit by a big public school. He had fine health and spirits, and a charm about him that was irresistible. 'He is like a running stream with the sun on it,' was the classic description given of him by William Johnson, his Eton tutor—a man of genius. In one of the letters which Johnson used to send to parents about their sons at the end of a half he wrote: 'Alfred has that sympathy with his tutor which is sometimes mistaken for docility.' This was a master stroke of delineation; Alfred, then and up to the end of his life, was never docile, was capable of going against any authority with whom he differed, and had in the background of his nature, for all his gift of sympathy, a certain sternness, and power of indignation, which sometimes startled his associates. He had a strong will and strong desires, but they were tempered by his gift for understanding, considering, and loving others. He took part in many a 'rag' of varied kinds, such as running fights in the passages of the house, and practical jokes of all kinds. Large pieces of soft bread, called by the contemptuous name of 'sqwug,' were often hurled with unerring aim, not only at other boys, but from behind a window blind at unsuspecting passers-by, who did not always take the joke. It was said of certain well-known Eton families that their

different characteristics were displayed in their treatment of 'sqwug.' The Horners threw it out of window; the Sturgis's put it on one side; the Lytteltons threw it at each other; and the Thompsons ate it.

Alfred often told of 'a notable battle against some colliers at Windsor, on the Cobler below the bridge, to which we had been driven by a storm of coal and stones.' Perhaps a successful lawyer will remember strolling as a boy into Alfred and Edward's room, where he was inveigled to draw up their blind by some sham description of a sight in the street below. The trick was successful for he staggered back, his face flattened by a huge lump of mud and stones, thrown by an angry tramp who had been waiting, as they well knew, for his revenge.

The house went through several changes during Alfred's seven years. At first in '68 it was nominally presided over by Mr. Evans, the father of Anne and Jane who were the real rulers of the house. He was a great invalid, and was rarely seen by the boys, though now and again they were sent up to his room. All Etonians, who were at My Dame's, will remember the kind of incident which Alfred describes in one of the two or three letters which he wrote to his father every half:

ETON COLLEGE,  
BUCKS, *6th October 1873.*

DEAR PAPA,—Edward having done a really first-class copy of Verse with which my Tutor is very much pleased I thought you would like to see them. Johnson was more pleased than I have ever seen him with verses.

Old Evans is flourishing, as Edward found him last Sunday

in bed. Edward was late for prayers, so he goes in to Old Evans, who as usual begins 'Really Lyttelton! just as this complaint came in I was writing to your father.' He then points to a desk with nothing on it by way of confirming his statement, which I need not tell you is a pure invention. . . .

I am up to Stone, a very agreeable and clever man who gets me on well. . . .

And then as a P.S. :

Give my love to Sybella, say I am getting on well in Euclid.

Evidently she had tried to help him in the holidays with this uncongenial study.

Miss Jane Evans left a great part of the government of the House in the hands of the boys themselves, and she brought to the task of selecting and then trusting them an unerring judgment of character. To quote from Edward's memoir :

Doubtless the fine personality and lofty serene goodness of our dear old dame Miss Jane Evans left a mark on Alfred for good. She had a knack of forecasting early what boys were going to be influential in the house, and appealing to them, especially when there was a crisis of any kind, for help in maintaining the high tone which on the whole characterised the community of over 50 boys for the thirty years of her undivided control. Alfred of course was picked out in this way, when he was fourteen.

Evans's possessed a library, free to all, but which was especially the meeting-place of the older boys. 'The Library' came gradually to mean the captain of the House, the captain of the football eleven, and five or six other boys invited to join, mainly as a confirmation and recognition

of their influence and position in the House. There was no formal election. Miss Evans would be consulted, and somehow, rarely by a distinct request either for inclusion or exclusion, it came about that the seven or eight boys privileged to form the library were those whose character and general behaviour helped to keep the atmosphere of the House sane and wholesome.

The boys would assemble in the library room in the evenings, and here many discussions took place, not only upon sport and games. Alfred is quoted, as having said that their community was like Athens, described in the Funeral Oration of Pericles, combining intellectual interest with active life. 'We philosophise without softness.'

This rather ambitious description probably embodied a distinct aim and effort on Alfred's part. All his life he never would allow talk to remain long at the level of gossip, however good-natured; it bored him, but it bored him because he loved the clash of mind and thought, and the ideas which leap out from it.

The members of the library were also invited to breakfast every morning with Miss Evans in her private room, and these talks, presided over by 'My Dame' with her humour, insight, and discriminating sympathy, were never forgotten by those who shared them; they were a great institution. The freedom of intercourse they brought about, the intimate discussion of the affairs of the House with her leading boys, had much to do with Jane Evans's extraordinary success in the rule of her kingdom.

Many years after, Alfred took the writer down to Eton, and we went, as solemn grown-up people, and breakfasted in the room where these hours had been spent. To Miss Evans, Alfred was still one of her boys who had held a great position in the House, and had done much to raise its station both in athletics and in general repute. She talked of the old days and of the present days ; they formed, of course, one continuous whole in her mind and memory. She gave a description of the first time she saw Edward and Alfred, when, as little boys, they came to visit their elder brother Bob ; rampagious fellows, but so small that Alfred at least had to be lifted up to peep into the aquarium on the stairs, and so rapacious of the good things Bob had provided for them, that they were both ill very soon after tea. She described, too, their first arrival as members of the House, and Alfred's tumbled curly hair and general untidiness of get-up.

Mr. Tarver, the master, saw him on almost the first day watching with absorbed and critical interest a game of football, and made the rapid pen and ink caricature here reproduced.

Alfred very soon showed his extraordinary prowess in all ball games ; some people have judged him the greatest player that ever lived, considering his record in so many games : cricket, football of three kinds, fives, racquets, and tennis. In all these he was supremely good.

One of the most striking proofs of his inborn aptitude was given about the year 1872, when he



CARICATURE OF ALFRED ON HIS FIRST DAY AT ETON  
WATCHING FOOTBALL

DRAWN BY MR. FARVER, 1868







broke his left arm out hunting at Hagley. Edward writes :

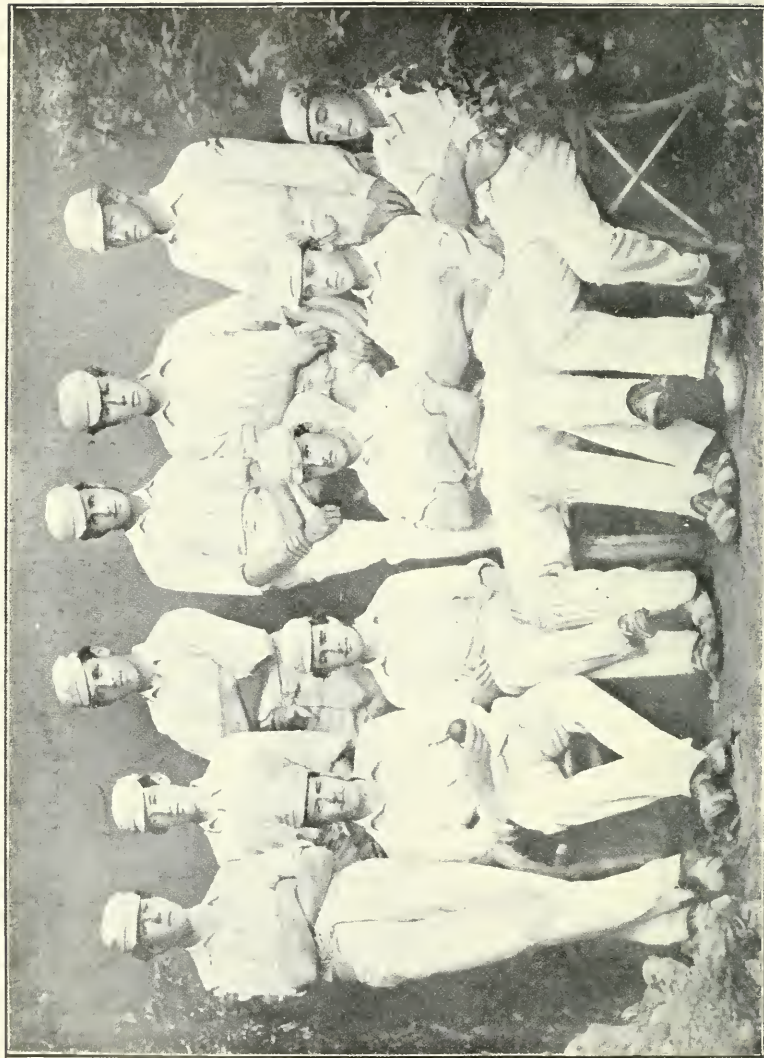
During the following half at Eton, being unable to play fives he took to racquets, and I think I am right in saying that within a year from the accident he was chosen to represent the school at Prince's.

Similarly, at Cambridge when he changed from racquets to tennis, in a few days it was patently clear that he would soon be among the best players in the country. Golf it is true was an exception, but Alfred only began playing seriously at 35, and it was not known or dreamt of in the early 70's at Eton. As to the other games he reached a dazzling eminence before he was 21, and in one, football, it may be doubted whether he ever surpassed his boyish performances. The newspaper writers who recorded his successes at other games have never known what he was as a 'flying man' at the Eton game, or a centre forward in the very early days of the Association game. He was over six foot one, and his onrush was like a tornado. There have been other players more deft at dribbling, there have been a few, very few, of greater speed, and there have been heavier players, but I never knew one who combined the three great essentials, and added to them a surprising accuracy at kicking goals and 'bunting' his opponents. This last faculty he exercised by dint of a jerk of his hips, not as ordinarily by lowering the shoulder, and so the aggressor could see no signs of the terrific impact coming. Once playing against the Royal Engineers I saw him make a run down from one end of the field to the other and floor four men on the way—the last two having charged him simultaneously from opposite sides, and both rebounding on to their backs—and shoot the goal at the end. Added to which he was generally in exactly the right state of irascibility, during most of the game, except when a successful 'bunt' dissolved him into a loud merry laugh, in which the prostrate victim not unfrequently joined. His method of securing a goal was peculiar and seldom failed, especially

in the Association game, at which in those days a great deal more individual play was allowed than is now. He would run down towards the corner and then swiftly turn inwards, running parallel to the back line, and some ten yards from it. At this point he was pursued probably by three of the opponents, barely keeping up. This continued till he got opposite the further goal-post, and then one huge foot was smartly dropped on to the ball, stopping it dead, and of course the pursuers all ran a yard or so too far, not suspecting the sudden pull up: thus he had a clear shot at the goal. When things grew to be exciting his ardour waxed to a formidable heat, and he would come thundering down with the heavy knees far advanced and all the paraphernalia of a Homeric onset. Thus it was no wonder that he was adored by the Black Country and Kennington Oval crowds, who used to shriek ecstatically every time he got a run down. Once in the dingiest purlieus of the Oval pavilion, when we were playing a University cricket match, about 1876, a diminutive unwashed tapster hailed me with cordiality. 'Ha, Lyttelton, I'm glad to see you—but it's your brother we all love so—to see him knock 'em down at football, oh it does my 'eart good, it does!' At Eton the sentiment with which he was regarded was the same, but there was added to it of course a large measure of schoolboy awe. As to his cricket, little need be said, except to correct a mistake which was common at the time he was at his prime. It was not the fact that his batting was distinguished by beauty of style, so much as by power, especially in the forward drive, and sometimes by extraordinary strength of back play. He was better with straight balls than with crooked, being curiously deficient in the cut behind point, but he had a grand hit to square leg and deep long-on. For those days also he was remarkably successful on difficult wickets, but as compared with some of the greatest of modern batsmen, and of course with W. G. himself, he had not the power of following a breaking ball with unerring certainty; but it should be remembered that there was not the demand for such skill as there is nowadays. Several of the best



Hon. A. Lyttelton. H. E. Whitmore. C. N. Miles. F. J. Bruce. Hon. R. H. Lyttelton. Hon. E. Lyttelton.



*Photo: Hills & Saunders, Eton*

F. M. Bucklands. W. W. Whitmore. E. O. H. Wilkinson. E. Hanbury. T. Parkyn.

ETON XI (1872)

bowlers never broke at all. As a wicket keeper he used to say that he belonged to the class of catchers rather than quick stumpers, and to excel in one was only possible with some loss to the other. Occasionally when he fielded he could do brilliant things, and was, as wicket keepers always are, a remarkably sure catch: and though nervous and excitable, never sufficiently so to disturb his eye. He always preferred to bat late in the day when the nerves were less jumpy. At all games from the very earliest times his temper was admirable, except now and again in the most trying moments of the Eton house matches, ordeals the searching character of which no one knows who has not been through them.

Alfred got into the Eton eleven at the age of fifteen, Edward the same year, and Bob was still member of a team which had already held Charles, Neville, Spencer, and Arthur. One can imagine Lord Lyttelton's pride in the succession of players, and picture him at the yearly matches at Lord's. Edward describes his attitude in the playing fields of Eton in 1872:

He was seated on the sward right in front of the spectators—then few in number—just out of the line of sight, with a pocket Homer in his hand, reading and murmuring the lines to himself, but as long as a son was batting, *never missing a ball*, and continuing to read between the balls.

Though their father obviously took the deepest interest in their games, Edward writes:

I do not remember his ever saying anything that could be put into a sentence to show he was delighted at our success, and yet he certainly was, and we somehow knew it well. On the other hand, if one of us offended against what he thought was true cricket his grief and indignation knew no bounds. He one day seriously alarmed his mother when, bursting into her room in the London house and flinging



himself into a chair, he groaned aloud 'Oh Charles, Charles ! I never dreamt he could have done it.' My grandmother, hastily concluding that some barely mentionable tragedy had occurred, said, 'Oh, George, tell me the worst,' but after close questioning the horror was disclosed : Charles had 'run out to a slow and been stumped.' This action offended against a canon which no one else that I know ever held sacred : viz. that all bowling should be played fast-footed. Though none of us either believed this or practised it we never thought of arguing the point. My father refused to discuss anything fundamental.

The following letter, dated 8th July 1872, is perhaps worth inserting here, for it shows the ruling passion so plainly :

ETON COLLEGE, 8th July 1872.

DEAR PAPA,—Being the most unfortunate of mankind I write to tell you that for the second time I have caught the mumps, happily this time very mildly, in fact not bad enough to keep me in bed, but none the less I am in a great fidget as to whether I shall be able to play at Lord's on Friday. My own impression is that I shall be able, as it is now Monday and I had them yesterday (Sunday), so I think that with luck I may be able to play, but I must say it is a most abominable nuisance having them at this time. The cricket was going on most prosperously—in fact if well enough there is no chance of either of us not playing on Friday ; so far we should be first and second choice, for since Winchester I have been in very good form, not having made a single figure since then ; 25. 12. 26. have been the last three, and Edward playing as well as ever. A boy in the eight the other day was attacked by mumps ten days before Henley, and he was so determined to row there that he utterly suppressed his mumps by means of cloths dipped in ice water, and he eventually rowed the races with the mumps actually on him. I caught them from a boy who also wanted to go to Henley and so refused to stay out, and coolly sat next me in school and chapel with a face the

right cheek of which resembled a tolerable-sized football. Hope the baby is getting better. Give my love to Sybella and the others.—Yr. Affec. and dutiful son,

ALFRED LYTTTELTON.

Alfred, early in his schooldays, seems to have made up his mind that the Classics were not for him; mathematics he ground away at, not indeed from any inherent liking or gift, but because he discerned in them some possible practical use. History always attracted him, and about half-way through his time at Eton he began to work at it seriously, in spite of his absorption in games.

He owed much at the beginning of his school life to the stimulus of his tutor, W. Johnson (Cory), and often recalled sayings of the man who would take his whole pupil-room out into the roadway if a regiment of soldiers were passing. 'Brats! Here comes the British Army,' Johnson would say, making the words sound like a trumpet call, while he stood bare-headed himself. Cory's *Guide to Modern English History* always remained one of Alfred's favourite books, read many times; he frequently quoted from it the author's regret for the days of Walter Scott when 'heretofore the fictions tolerated in virtuous parlours had sounded like the purring of tame cats. In the Waverley period there was heard twice a year a brave man's trumpet, and no one was afraid to listen.' Mr. Oscar Browning, another master, helped by sympathy and friendly discussion to develop his love of books, and even at this time no greater mistake could be made than to imagine Alfred as wholly absorbed in athletics. His mind was alert



and independent, avid of experiment and experience. He was eager to make friends with all kinds of people, and sought companionship not only in games and school interests, but went farther afield and picked out from among both masters and boys those with whom he could share his taste for music, politics, and literature. An instance of this was the choice he and Edward made of Howard Sturgis as their mess-mate and intimate, a boy who was absolutely indifferent at and to athletics, and who on the surface would have seemed an unlikely associate for them to select. But they needed him because he ministered to other strongly developed tastes and interests. Among these was the intense love of music which they shared with their brothers and cousins. No opportunity was missed of hearing music whenever and wherever they could. There was just time by running hard after Eton chapel at 3, to get to the service at St. George's and hear the exquisite music from a seat near the north door of the nave. Alfred often did this, and made friends with several of the choirmen: but his attention was not solely concentrated on the service, or on the music, as his mimicry of their various methods of singing betrayed.

Lord Midleton, who was one of Alfred's greatest Eton friends, writes:

The period from 1872, when he got into the eleven, to 1874, when he became the first Etonian of the day, marks an epoch in Alfred's life. The Lytteltons, like several other celebrated Eton families, were reared hardly, and Alfred shared with his brothers a certain brusquerie of manner and

carelessness of dress, which in the seventies was beginning to be out of date. It is difficult to realise that one who subsequently formed a notable exception to the rule that strong character and popularity rarely run together, failed at first in the critical atmosphere of Eton. Lower boys who mistook his swinging walk to the cricket field for swagger were heard to express the futile hope that he might go out first ball, and those who suffered from one of his 'tornado' charges at football did not always rise with blessings on their lips. Moreover, house feeling ran high, and the predominance which Evans's soon obtained with four Lytteltons in the field was felt as a burden. But successive School successes rapidly brought the sunny side of Alfred to the front. It was pure joy to him to encourage a lesser light, and fine as were the family qualities and traditions, he possibly became better known and therefore more appreciated by the School at large than any of his brothers.

A proof of this popularity and of the trust of the School in his fairness was shown when he was Keeper of the Field in 1874. Warre's and Evans's, for long great rivals, were clearly to be pitted against each other in the final for the House Cup. In the earlier matches Warre's found means of advancing their game some fifty-nine yards by the liberal use of what is known in some games as 'offside,' and at Eton as sneaking. Alfred determined to remedy this by giving a 'free kick.' Friends advised him, as an interested party, to defer action till after the great House Match: he was not to be persuaded. He altered the rule a week before, and the School entirely supported him.

It was during his last three years that he developed considerable power in 'Pop.'<sup>1</sup> Although at no time in his life an exceptionally fluent speaker, he delighted to expose the often crude harangues of pretentious orators by a few choice

<sup>1</sup> 'Pop' or 'Eton Society' is a self-elected athletic and debating society of ancient and intricate traditions. From time to time its debates rise to a high level, for instance when Alfred Lyttelton's genius for games made him a leader, and some statesmanlike promise was shown in debates in Pop.—The Rev. Ronald Knox on Charles Lister.

phrases, and revelled in well-convinced Liberalism at a time when Mr. Gladstone's Ministry of 1868-74, the most fruitful administration in great and now uncontested measures ever known, was drawing to a close, and when the divisions on Imperial Policy had not arisen. In this however, unlike other chapters of his Eton fame, it could not be said of him, as afterwards of George Curzon, that old Etonians journeyed down to gaze and wonder at his mastership of the craft.

In matters other than games his influence was marked. Edward writes of him in the often quoted Memoir :

He had then as always an unusually strong will and was by nature wholesome-minded. He very rarely reproved any rascality, as though there was little indeed of the Puritan in him there was still less of the Pharisee, and while he would recognise that so-and-so was an abomination to our society, he never found the faintest satisfaction in knowing what his ill-doings were. Hence, though he was in the very mid-stream of boy life exposed to all its various elements, some at that time poisonous, some barbarous, some splendidly healthy, there was a dominating manliness about him which did not exactly rebuke vice, but banished it, and all diseased talk about it, from his company. Only to what was really ludicrous would he listen ; all that was defamatory he eschewed. It was not a moral struggle with him to leave these depths unscanned. They repelled him, and that was enough.

But though he was in many respects an absolutely normal boy, and therefore did not trouble himself overmuch about questions of virtue and vice, he at all times cared greatly for the good repute of the House and the School. I know of at least one instance where he took infinite trouble to get a boy away from among a set of others whose influence he thought bad. It was a difficult task and his efforts seemed a mere waste of time ; but he discerned the latent quality, persisted, and finally succeeded.

All through his schooldays Alfred was conscious of the great effort his father had made to send his eight sons to Eton in turn, and of the sacrifices and struggles this expenditure entailed. In many of his letters there are touching little references to this ever present anxiety ; asking for a special birthday present, which need only be second-hand ; assuring his father that it was unnecessary to spend money on a doctor for his back (though this, no doubt, also coincided with his dislike of coming up to London for the day) ; deferring a birthday present for three years, so as to have the lump sum for a gun, and so on. He made a good deal of money himself by writing, and was able to keep his budget straight, but extra luxuries or expeditions were not possible. In the spring of 1874, however, he had an invitation to go abroad with Alfred Farquhar, and for some reason Lord Lyttelton did not approve the scheme. Alfred's letter was persuasive and diplomatic :

*26th March 1874.*

MY DEAR PAPA,—I write in a very troublesome way to ask whether you will not reconsider your fiat with regard to my going abroad. Alfred Farquhar has written to me urging me very strongly to come notwithstanding the racquets. I have been talking to Ainger myself just this moment and he wants me to come very much himself. It certainly does seem rather a pity when one has a chance of going abroad with three companions of all others those I should most anxiously choose, particularly when some one has offered to pay. With regard to the History I am willing to go all lengths to read the week I do remain in London, and this morning I have been talking to one Todd who got the History prize, who says there is no better time for reading,

as he knows by personal experience, than when travelling. Ainger has sketched out the plan of the journey and where I am to meet them in case I go ; it certainly would be most wonderful fun. I should be grievously disappointed at being left in the lurch, but still you know best.—Yr. affectionate—dutiful

ALFRED LYTTTELTON.

The trip was allowed, and was an immense success as far as enjoyment went. Alfred does not seem to have checked his love of practical jokes. He often told the story of his substitution of a ' *Dames seules* ' label on to a smoking-carriage full of fat Frenchmen, while he and his companions lay inside the empty carriage listening to the angry clamour which broke out on the platform after a very few moments. It was in Italy also that, as his train moved out of the Venice station, he saw an official at the level-crossing smoking one of the long attenuated cigars dear to Italians, and could not resist throwing a wet pulpy orange, which he had been sucking, with unerring aim full into the man's face ; then he tumbled back into his seat with laughter like his Uncle Billy's. Mr. Ainger writes :

The victim exerted all his efforts to get his mate on the engine to stop the train—which might have led us to an Italian dungeon, had he succeeded—the rest of the party were metaphorically on their knees praying that the speed might not slacken.

The first great sorrow of his life clouded the last few months of Alfred's Eton experiences. May Lyttelton, though she was only twenty-four when she died, left behind her an ineffaceable memory. She was above all things vital, taking every breath



of life deep into her being ; love and sympathy and interest streamed out from her. She was vivid and impetuous : one of those people who charge the atmosphere with life whenever they appear, and never touch others without influencing them. She was tall and finely built, and although not strictly beautiful made an impression of beauty. Many people loved her, both men and women, and she seemed to attract natures endowed with unusual qualities. Thus among her intimate women friends were Frances Graham, afterwards Lady Horner ; and Kathleen Clive, who many years later became the wife of Arthur Lyttelton. Among her men friends were such people as Rutherford Graham, the handsome brother of Frances Graham, who died in 1874 ; Edward Deninson, Arthur Godley, H. S. Holland, and Arthur Balfour. In her short life she experienced many of the deeper emotions ; she had loved and sorrowed, and just when death took her, there seemed to be opening before her a life, completed by love, and with opportunities for the development of her powers. But it was not to be. She fell ill with a malignant form of fever, and after a long struggling illness, and when her condition had shown improvement for several days, she died suddenly of exhaustion at Hagley Rectory, where she had been nursed. Alfred and Edward were summoned back from Eton in time to see her alive, but not conscious.

The first break in the family circle was a terrible grief. It was during these days of sorrow that the friendship between Alfred and his cousin Mary

Gladstone, which lasted all his life, began. He writes to his father from Eton in May giving him a list of the summer cricket matches, telling him that he has won the School Holyday task prize in spite of arriving too late for the first three questions, and ends his letter, 'I have not heard much since I left you, but had a very nice talk with M. Gladstone last Sunday about that which is the shadow across our lives.'

In July he writes his last letter as an Eton boy :

ETON COLLEGE, 28th July.

DEAR PAPA,—I was very sorry to have missed you as I hear you were down here the day before yesterday, and should have liked to have seen you on the last visit you will pay Eton with one of your sons there as a boy. Unless I telegraph or write to say otherwise, I shall not get to Hagley till Saturday the 7th, but I hope some of you will come into Worcester or Hanbury during the course of the week throughout which I shall be playing cricket. Will you kindly send me whatever you sent Bob or Edward, I think I can manage with the same (though of course I have had many more expenses), having made something by writing and such like. The history prize was a great break.<sup>1</sup> I will bring the papers.—Yr. affectionate and dutiful son,

ALFRED LYTTTELTON.

The History prize, which he won in April 1875, was a great delight to the boy who had carried off almost every athletic honour.

<sup>1</sup> *Glynnese Glossary*: 'Break.'—The etymology of this elegant term is sufficiently clear. It indicates any event or circumstance that breaks or tends to break the monotony of existence. Lady Lyttelton bringing her husband a bit of buttered toast would say, 'Here, dear, I've brought you a nice little break'; the appearance of a new baby born to a friend 'an immense break'; it would be imputed to a person fond of morbid excitement, that he would call the outburst of an European War 'such a break.'



After this success there seems to have been a consultation as to whether he should break the family tradition and go to Oxford instead of Cambridge. The following letter shows what careful consideration was given to the point. Evidently his sister, then settled with her husband at Keble College, had been giving advice :

MY DEAR LAVINIA,—You must be swearing dreadfully at me as the most ungrateful of brothers ; your letter was really most admirable but the ideas it contained were not to be dismissed in a day or so, thus I took some time to think them over, and as I went up to London just after I received the letter I laid the contents, having previously got Sybella on our side, before the Peer. Ever since the beginning of August when I met Sir William Anson, who you know is a fellow of All Souls and with whom I have had a kind of acquaintance owing to his being the examiner in our History prize here, I have thought with many hesitations over the Oxford idea. Anson said that seeing what he had seen of my work, as far as man could foretell, I ought to make with all steady application a certainty of an All Souls fellowship. He said that I should have a great start of the men who go in for those fellowships, remarking that he himself for instance never studied history at all till his last year at Oxford. Now without venturing to compare so humble an individual as myself with a clever man like Anson I should, you see, have six years' start of him : for three years I have worked hard at history under an admirable lecturer, and if I saw a really good chance of easing the Peer even apart from my own self-advancement I would work twice as hard again, for the four years to come. I won't deny that the notion is very repugnant to me in many ways ; if I had one other brother there before me it would be an easier task, but at Oxford, except that which you have effected for it with your bright, cheerful, duty-loving nature, the Lyttelton name is unknown. It is, too, a very bitter

thing to relinquish the idea of renewing the constant companionship with old Edward, to which I frequently and perpetually have been looking forward. To play against him at Lord's! My word! it's horrible to think of it. Again, University though a rare good place is a long way behind Trinity. Trinity is so wide in scope, every one finds some one to his taste there, the relations between don and undergrad are so infinitely more pleasant in the latter than the former. Still, these are but sentimental objections after all; the real objections are these. Can I get into University? I tremble to think of Bradley's face when he first casts his eye upon my Latin Prose; in other departments of Latin I am not bad, but of Greek my knowledge is most limited. But of course History is a great deal in matriculation there. Again, supposing me safely into University (I won't on any account go to any other college) there is always the *chance*—mind that horrid word—of failure, in the Fellowship. My last objection is Arthur's; he says superficiality is the curse of the family mind, that a plausible outward show of knowledge is ingrained in us; he says that the Cambridge education is far more likely to eradicate those deficiencies, which I admit are as strong in me as in any of us, than an Oxford one. His opinion is always worth listening to but I think he makes a mistake. Archer Clive, practical enough in all conscience, Lacaita, one of the soundest and most liberal-minded of men, both agree in cracking up the history school at Oxford most strongly.

If you read one of the examination papers in the History tripos, you will say a plausible man must indeed be plausible if he can throw dust into the eyes of the examiners by a superficial array of theories instead of a sound and accurate knowledge of facts. It seems to me that it is impossible without thorough accuracy to do much in history. Lastly, the Peer is sadly averse to the scheme, perhaps he won't be when he thinks over it for some time.—If you get so far in so lengthy an epistle, you will see, I think, some 'cons' to the scheme, but many 'pros.'

You are a great set off to some of the sentimental objections; Edward is a great deal, but so are you and the Warden. My own feeling is though there are many objections of sentiment, and a few practical, that when I sit discussing at thirty-five years of age a chop and small beer in rather dingy chambers without many books, and with a sadly large amount of leisure, I should feel a sad fool for having thrown away what certainly is only a chance, but more or less a good chance of £200 a year. For practical reasons the Oxford scheme ought to be very seriously considered, but even on theoretical grounds it has a fairly strong side of the question. A new element in a family so very conservative in many ways would not be a bad thing. Principle and cash *v.* prejudice and sentiment.—Yours ever affectionately,  
ALFRED LYTTELTON.

At Eton the social intercourse between master and boys has always played a great part. Among those who in Alfred's time took the trouble to cultivate relations with boys outside their own houses were Mr. Ainger and Mr. Walter Durnford. Both were particularly fond of Alfred and he of them, and the friendships formed in this way were never dropped.

To Mr. Ainger's house Alfred and Edward often went on Sunday evenings, where they would sing through such music as Brahms's 'Song of Destiny,' portions of the great Handel oratorios, and other works. These evenings were a great joy to them. There were often delightful expeditions; quiet hours on the river with Mr. Ainger or Mr. Durnford or others; long drives on St. Luke's day to see the autumn tints at the Beeches or Marlow; Sunday breakfasts, when they met people from the outside world. Then there were always the great days of the

Eton and Winchester and Eton and Harrow matches, days when nothing was left of school ambitions but a passionate effort to win, and when half the social world shared in the excitement and tension.

Arthur Benson, in a charming paper in the *Cornhill*,<sup>1</sup> writes of his memory of Alfred at Eton :

It is not a reminiscence ; it is just the slightest and simplest of impressions of Alfred Lyttelton, by one who was a little boy at Eton when he was a big boy clothed with unapproachable glory.

Eton first ; the first service in chapel, and I feeling very small and obscure in the great building with its long rows of stalls, ranks of masters, the old spiky organ towering up to the huge far-off timbered roof ; the great absurd windows, and farther and farther away the long lines of those delicate clustered columns and mullions, on to the huge east window, with the white crucifix relieved against the dark overhung cloudy background.

The organ sounds ; the procession enters, the Sixth Form pass in, two rows of boys, Collegers and Oppidans side by side ; the Collegers diverge at once, at the entrance of the choir, to a sort of siding of their own. The Oppidans advance up the centre, all the congregation remaining seated. What old strong men they seemed to me then to be, though they were boys of eighteen and nineteen ; but they looked older in those days, because of the careful nurture of whiskers, like little sausages, down each cheek. I thought they must be infinitely learned and very severe, hardly boys at all. And then, too, there was an odd custom, long since disused, that they should carry their tall hats—and they were very tall in those days—held by the brim, close to the chest, with the top just on a level with the chin. It gave a sense of awful solemnity, those ten figures, in step, gazing eastward over the tops of their hats, very stiff and upright. But in

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by permission of the Editor.

the middle came one to whom public appearances had nothing formidable about them. He swung his hat in his hand instead of carrying it upright. His light curly hair, his sparkling smiling eyes, his under-lip just thrust out, all gave a look of intense animation and activity. Who could the hero be?—I soon found out ; it was Alfred Lyttelton, the unquestioned and undisputed king of the place, last of a long line of well-known brothers, and the most famous of all.

One saw him about the street and playing-fields, in glimpses and vignettes, always talking and laughing, or splashed and stained with mud in the football field, or striding to the wicket with his blue cap and sash ; always the easy centre of every scene, perfectly natural, unembarrassed, serene. I remember his great shouts, and his huge laughter in the football field ; he never blamed his team, but always encouraged and applauded every bit of creditable play : the only boy who might do exactly as he liked, and about whom, in every relation of life, there was never a word said except in praise.

And Lord Middleton again :

Alfred's influence and his natural gift for leadership probably never had fuller scope than in his last year at Eton, which he always regarded as the brightest moment of his public life. ' I am,' he wrote at that time to a friend, ' the busiest citizen in this place,' and it would be impossible to imagine how any boy of eighteen could be more taxed, physically and mentally, than he was during the three months of the summer half. He had just carried off the holiday task, on a historical subject, beating on this occasion the brightest intellects of the whole School. Although no great classic, he took his full share of the work of Sixth Form. As Captain of the Eleven, an honour rarely associated with a seat in the headmaster's division, he met to the utmost the hourly exacting demands of that most coveted post. He was President of ' Pop,' and took a leading part in the debates, besides assisting to organise them.



He was largely responsible for editing the *Eton College Chronicle*. He was also President of the Literary Society, which he was loath to allow to lapse, simply for his athletic calls, and beyond all these he was the natural referee and composer of all important school troubles, and these abounded somewhat liberally during the period in question.

Doctor Hornby, who had then been headmaster for some years, was revered by all those who came in contact with him, and possessed the universal respect of the School. But the very qualities which made him so great a gentleman also made the position of Sixth Form very difficult. He had never found it possible to decide for them, although formally invited to do so, how they were to reconcile their duties of keeping order and helping the masters, with that code of honour between boys which forbids spying or talebearing. Eton at the moment had grown rapidly in numbers, and a sort of second set had grown up who were not amenable to the influences of the natural heads of the School. From this a variety of troubles, in which the power and authority of Sixth Form was being constantly called in question, ensued. The eminent revivalists Moody and Sankey were then in England. A proposal had been made that they should hold services for the boys in a large tent. Leaders of the sporting party had in preparation for the visit bought up every rotten egg for miles. A disgraceful disturbance was inevitable to the discredit of the School, and a petition was consequently started by Sixth Form asking the headmaster to decline the visit. This petition, when it had been signed by over six hundred boys, was torn up by one of the leaders of the turbulent party. For this gross offence, which involved also an insult to Sixth Form, it was determined that condign punishment was necessary, and the offender was cited to appear in the School Library before Sixth Form on a certain morning. No such thing as a school caning had taken place for a generation, and as the offender was a member of the 'Eight,' and a most powerful individual, nothing but the fact that Alfred and two or three others of similar physique in the Sixth Form were prepared

to support authority made his punishment possible, but as it was, after brief expostulation he received a most satisfactory chastisement at the hands of the Captain of the School, who was followed with equal vigour by the Captain of the Oppidans. Shortly afterwards the Captain of the School was hissed by some of the same party, and Alfred made it perfectly clear that if the outrage was continued, he should hold the offenders responsible to himself. There was no renewal of the offence.

Another incident which gave him great concern, and which illustrates the extent of his influence both with boys and masters, was an occurrence on the 4th of June, when after the usual champagne supper, a friend, who happened to be also a valuable member of the Eleven, was sufficiently overcome by the festivities to give a serious handle to the authorities. The following morning the writer was summoned by Alfred to confer with him, as to a proposal made by the delinquent that they should jointly go to the Headmaster and allege that his general influence on the School was so good that the extreme penalty of expulsion should be remitted. The writer well remembers Alfred pacing up and down Miss Evans's garden, torn by his conflicting desire to save his friend, and do a public service to the School in regard to the Harrow match on the one hand, and not to go beyond the truth on the other. After some hours a form of words which met the case was arranged, and Doctor Hornby made it clear that but for that testimony he had only one course open to him, but he removed the culprit from the headmaster's division to a lower one.

School 'hero worship' is sometimes made light of. It is perhaps the highest tribute to Alfred's moral fibre that he was not spoiled by the adulation which boys could not fail to bestow on one who, besides all other qualities, was the finest cricketer, football, racket, and fives player in the School, and was Captain or keeper in every department, nor by his very special cult among the masters with even the least convivial of whom he was a favoured guest. 'X met me to-day,' said Alfred, alluding to a master famed for a sad



voice, 'and asked me to dine with him in the same tone that he might have invited me to drink castor oil with him.' The present famous Provost (Dr. Warre), meeting him for the first time in December 1874, observed, 'Alfred Lyttelton is as good a fellow as any one could be who has only had to deal with one man in his life and that was Miss Evans.'

Two references to the close of this halcyon phase of Alfred's life may be permissible. Mr. Oscar Browning, at the close of the day when Alfred had handed over all his offices to his successors, paid him the rare compliment of giving a leaving dinner in his honour to his chief friends among masters and boys. As the evening neared its close Alfred said to his neighbour, 'Only forty-eight hours now between me and insignificance.' Sitting next to the same friend in Chapel next morning, when the hymn was given out, 'We love the place, O God,' he whispered, 'Our best battles have been fought and won in this place'—no unfitting tribute to an unequalled Eton life.

He was indeed the king of the school by reason of his extraordinary popularity and his pre-eminence in all the great games. As he often said, 'No position in after life, however great, could be as complete as that of a swell at Eton,' and among such perhaps no one ever occupied quite the same position as he did, or seemed able to live in the two worlds of masters and boys with equal ease, and without creating any of the distrust which, at least among the boys, might have been expected. Big boys and little boys, sportsmen and workers, dreamers and doers, all loved him. He accepted their affection as part of life, as one of the many joys of existence, and not as a personal tribute to be gloried in.

There was a complete absence of swagger in his habits, and a genuine appreciation of the qualities

and successes of others. One of the causes of Alfred's popularity, both at school and in after life, was his genius for companionship in all games, and perhaps specially in those where a steady nerve is essential. His generous delight in any good stroke of his companion made most people play their best when with him. And the same quality coloured all his intercourse with others. He drew the best out of men, in play and talk and feeling, because he never failed to discern it, and to welcome it with joy.

One can picture him in the lovely summer weather, with his splendid physique and grace, his curly head, bright laughing eyes, and delightful smile, swinging down to the playing fields in superb spirits, after perhaps some good hours' work, revelling in the happy companionship of his friends, and not unaware of the unique position he had attained in the school, one of unquestioned authority and power combined with universal popularity. It would have been enough to turn most boys' heads, but Alfred never confused values, and always kept a due sense of proportion. He knew he was king in a small realm, and looked forward to the struggle in the greater world outside with a tightening of his will and a resolution not to fall short, but well aware that the lists were great and the champions formidable.

Many years later he wrote of Eton in a short essay, and described the various reasons why men sent their sons to the old school :

They remember the magnificent years they spent at Eton in their youths, the romance of the ancient buildings and

nobly timbered fields, of the broad river crowned by the stately towers of Windsor ; they dream of their then free and careless life, each day bringing some bright enterprise unmarred by doubts of expediency or ' questionings of sense and outward things,' and they gladly echo the words of a well-known Etonian : ' In London, life is endurable, at the University it was enjoyable, at Eton it was fascinating,' and so they save up their money, and determine that at least their eldest son shall have the chance of kindling for himself those sunny memories ; perhaps they may ask him to work harder than they did themselves, but their object will be attained if he is as happy as they were.





*Photo: Hills & Saunders*

E. O. P. BOUVERIE AND ALFRED

## CHAPTER III

### CAMBRIDGE

1875-1878

No pleasanter companion, I suppose, had any of them, so frank, open, guileless, fearless, a brother to all worthy souls whatsoever. Come when you might, here is he, open-hearted, rich in cheerful fancies, in grave logic, in all kinds of bright activity.—Carlyle's *Life of Sterling*.

IN the early autumn Alfred followed the family tradition after all and went to Cambridge. He must already have made up his mind to become a barrister, and to read for the History tripos, which involves also a considerable study of law. He never regretted for a moment this choice of a profession, and there is no trace in any of his letters of doubts upon the matter. It seemed to be taken for granted when he left Eton that he should prepare himself for this career.

In a letter from Cambridge dated by his father, 14th November 1875, Alfred writes :

Life is very enjoyable here. I think I like the place more each day, the sense of independence and irresponsibility wonderfully exhilarating. The thought of Little-go, I am bound to say, is not so. The 'Big Un'<sup>1</sup> is very qualified in his prophecies. I myself am not at all sanguine ; the mathematics, you know, are very serious, but the classics which Edward was able to leave almost

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Smith, the well-known Coach.

untouched, it is quite impossible for me to neglect. . . . However, the three or four hours' work at mathematics every day is, I feel, wonderfully wholesome, and is developing in me almost a liking for certain branches of the art. I won an uninteresting thing, Throwing the Hammer, at the Freshman's sports, and was 24 inches behind the man who won in the 100 yards.

In another letter to the same, a little later in February 1876, he writes :

One great thing is gained here. If by chance one became cognisant of the existence of a beast, or a blackguardly set at Eton, one felt an obligation, owing to the comparative smallness of the place, to uproot him from it. Here the attempt would be absurd. Thus to watch a cadger pass one's window, and to feel that both he and you are units in the great throng, is a privilege unknown to Eton where the obligation was urgent, and where the attempt often failed with mortification.

Christmas finds him at Hagley, and from there he writes once more to Mary :

HAGLEY, *Sunday, 2nd January 1876.*

It is an age since I have written to you; the latter part of Cambridge was so occupied in unsuccessful cramming that there was little time, and that little found me so limp, that to write a letter worth reading was sheer impossibility. And yet often when mathematics had reduced me to a completely dizzy condition, did I long for a sight of you and a look into your eyes. I used to play out of the manuscript book a great deal there, it required nothing more to remind me wonderfully vividly of May and you. There are lots of things in it I want you to help me out in, when you come here. I read your letter several times; each time the beautiful thoughts in it appeared more striking, and each time the slight tinge of sadness became more



evident : much of what you said about the parting with the old year struck me as wonderfully true and beautiful to think on, yet every now and then, especially this holiday when Tom Ratliff was here, and when we sang and did all that May would have enjoyed with such intensity, I feel the yearning which seems to approach almost to anger in its strength. Your letter and the ideas suggested by it did, and will do much more, I hope, to soften such thoughts.

The interest taken in the growth and development of his brothers-in-law by Edward Talbot, the present Bishop of Winchester, is shown by one or two of his letters to Alfred at this time. Naturally the start at Cambridge filled Edward Talbot's mind with misgivings for the stability of his attractive young brother-in-law, but it must have required courage to write as he did. Perhaps he knew that Alfred, despite his energy in self-defence when attacked, would always hear any appeal to his deeper self. He wrote :

You have already so much knowledge of the world that it is not the plunge to you that it is to many, and some of the difficulties are perhaps dismissed, which you had at Eton. If not, you will not be sorry to begin again and deal with them better : one always wishes one had the chance of a second trial.

He warns him against letting the essentials of his faith evaporate and against the snares of desiring to please, and begs him to keep up certain devotional observances. To this Alfred answered :

TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

MY DEAR EDWARD,—You will, I think, admit my apologies for being late in replying to you. I did not want to write in

a great hurry, and the moments of leisure are not as frequent as I thought they would be.

Now to thank you, my dear man, very heartily for your excellent and affectionately given counsel : at no time could such advice be more necessary, believe me it will always be acceptable. How intuitively you seem to have hit upon the *social* difficulties that surround one here ; it is not a hard task to me to stick to my colours in many matters ; in any political opinion for instance it is far from difficult to uphold however much others may differ, but it is not easy without being forward to contest some freethinkers much cleverer than oneself upon religious questions. To show one's disapproval tacitly if possible at the time, to expostulate afterwards is perhaps the best course. There must be, of course, many points in various matters upon which one's opinion must change ; this nevertheless does not make me in the least blind to the danger, you so wisely pointed out, of letting them be altered gradually from the desire of pleasing the people with whom one's life is chiefly spent. . . .

The Chapels are wonderfully well arranged, and harmonious ; the feeling of calm is very soothing. My rules about Holy Communion have been, never less than once a month, generally to go rather oftener ; this, I think, should depend more or less upon one's feelings. Your suggestion of a time for silence in connection with Communion is a good one ; I will endeavour to accept it. The warning against luxury and forgetfulness in almsgiving is well needed here, the temptation to do so is patent. I feel the discipline of doing the mathematics very wholesome and strengthening for the wits, any work will be easy after it, but my prospects of passing the examination are very dim. The life is indeed a wonderfully free and joyous one, perhaps wanting in the exciting pleasures of Eton, wanting also as yet the great delight of finding out and if possible attracting to oneself a younger mind, but releasing one from the galling responsibilities which were so oppressive at Eton, though of course not from those which we all must have to bear wherever we are. Thanks once more, my dear man, for your

beautiful letter. I shall always keep it and read it at intervals, looking over the fine strong words will always be a great benefit, and in the midst of the bustle of life will, I think, be calming in their effect.—Yours ever affectionately,

ALFRED LYTTELTON.

Edward writes of this time in the Memoir :

The first problem was how to combine society, athletics, and reading. It never has been a simple matter, and young fellows who try to do it generally go far towards spoiling the reading or the games, if cricket is one of the latter ; especially in the summer term when visitors were numerous, and some of our friends were in want of entertainers for late suppers, it seemed churlish to refuse, but accepting meant going to bed late, and so being unable to read much before cricket began at 12 at Fenner's. In those days there were no trams nor bicycles, and playing for the University meant walking the whole way there and back, besides whatever fatigue your own or any one else's runs entailed. During the winter there was more elbow-room, as football or fives consumed only a short time and allowed two good hours before dinner at 7 in hall, besides the morning and late evening.

But the life was full of distractions, and among these the chief was the delightful society in Trinity, not only of our contemporaries but of older men. It was all very well to make a rule of going to bed at 11 P.M. and rising betimes for reading, but how if at that hour the talk in some college room began to wax interesting, and amid the aroma of tobacco and a very occasional glass of hot grog there set in that intercourse between man and man which has so often been celebrated by gifted members of the great college. Clearly a rigid adherent to a rule often loses something which cannot be recovered. The clashing of wits among the cleverest youths of the day is not an experience to be foregone without very good reason. It will always be a question difficult of decision where to draw the line. Alfred anyhow, for weal or woe, drew it indulgently as far as social

claims were concerned. He joined the A.D.C., which certainly took up a good spell of time, but on the other hand avoided speaking at the Union, and abstained from riding and driving and any diversions except acting and athletics and much dining out. But this policy made it very unlikely that he would take a high degree.

But if his letters at this time, 1875-1876, are read, it becomes clear that as regards *effort* his life was strenuous in the direction of intellectual claims as well as athletic and social. He writes in one of trying to secure his six hours a day reading. This was the figure we all of us aimed at but very few attained, and some of those who did were using the brain very languidly all the time. Scores of undergraduates only learn how to concentrate their full attention on their reading when it is too late for the purpose of the Tripos or the Final Schools : indeed, it looks as if the power to do so often only grows at a later stage in development. Moreover, nothing can be more deceptive. A friend who became a high wrangler once told me he tried the experiment of timing his reading for a week. He had been telling his acquaintances that six hours daily was his average—but after six days tested by an open watch on the table and all interruptions subtracted, the melancholy result was not six hours but two and a quarter. Of course it is impossible to say how far Alfred was deceived, as many of us undoubtedly were, by the wish to believe what was all the time not a fact : but considering what was said about his powers at Eton, it seems fairly clear that the inroads on his work were too numerous to allow of his doing himself full justice in the Tripos : in other words, though he did not think it himself, he was able enough to have got a First in History had his time been less disturbed. Another indication is the rapid advance in accuracy and grasp which he showed when he got to work at the Bar very soon afterwards. But of course it may be true all the time that the mind only acquired at twenty-five the powers possessed by others at twenty-two ; but this postponement was a natural consequence of the growth of a big bodily frame, the strength

of which was heavily taxed all through the years of University life. The labour of brain concentration was for him greater than could have been guessed by any one not intimate with him, and it is important that what he accomplished at this time and afterwards should be gauged in the light of certain physical disabilities which he rarely alluded to in conversation except to laugh at. When he was in the growing stage at Eton he suffered more than almost any of his brothers from what was known as the 'family back,' and which went far to stop his football in 1872, when it was badly needed for the House Cup Matches. From then to the end of his football time he was under disadvantages from the heart being a little small for the body, and from Cambridge days onwards, for some years at any rate, he complained of digestive troubles which sometimes sour the temper and induce hypochondriacal symptoms. In Alfred's case, however, they were powerless to interrupt the radiance of his presence or the unrivalled cordiality of his address. Only in his intimate letters are these things emphasised at all, and beyond doubt they make it the more surprising that the impression he left on all his friends through the whole of his life was one of joyousness. His spirits were not affected by five or six attacks of an appalling torture in 1875 and 1876, supposed at the time to be gall stones, but which were without doubt symptoms of some dangerous malady. For later knowledge has made it probable that they were premonitions of the same complaint which finally proved fatal to him. Only those who were with him during one of these attacks could imagine the agony he went through, or the prostration afterwards: still less could they picture the brightness and pluck with which he faced them.

Meantime, among his contemporaries there were men whose company would have been a pleasure to any one apart from their brain power. Hallam and Lionel Tennyson, Richmond Ritchie, Stephen Spring-Rice (the last three dead), Bernard Holland, J. E. C. Welldon, A. C. Cole, Arnald de Grey, Charles Hardinge (since Viceroy of India), Arnold



Hills, Jerry Chance, Leonard Powell, Howard Sturgis, James Lowther (afterwards Speaker), Edward O. Bouverie, Charles Brookfield (the actor), James Parker-Smith, Herbert Stephen—these and a few others *quos enumerare longum est* made up the principal ingredients of the group with whom Alfred had most to do. But there was a swarm of others, cricketers, acting men and ordinary gentlemanlike fellows, among whom he soon became a *persona grata*. But all these were undergraduates when he first went up, and their collective influence must be estimated as markedly less than that of the very brilliant group who were either the junior fellows of the College or were reading for Fellowships.

Foremost among those were Frank, Gerald, and Eustace Balfour, F. Jenkinson, G. C. Macaulay, Verrall, S. H. Butcher and his brother J. G. Occasional visits from men like Arthur Balfour, Fred and Ernest Myers, and F. W. Maitland formed part of this rich intellectual stimulus. Among the dons we saw a little of Henry Sidgwick, a good deal of Henry Jackson, but most of all of J. W. Clark. Alfred often met Basil Hammond, the History Lecturer, James Stuart, Edmond Gurney, and George Prothero.

Now the most prominent characteristic of this society, as was indeed to be expected of any University set in the seventies, was its pronouncedly anti-Christian tone. The effect of the great scientific movement, and of Darwin's writings in particular, was at its height. It was the fashion to be blatantly pagan, though a shrewd observer might have detected what was the truth, viz. that many of these men of light and leading would come to a very different and far less antagonistic position before they reached middle life. Into a vortex of clever talk and untrammelled speculation we youngsters were flung.

The peculiarity of Trinity College at that time was that the religious feeling of the men was mainly confined to an 'Evangelical' set with whom our men had little in common. It was a loss to us that there was hardly any representation of the intellectual 'High Church,' though I should mention

V. H. Stanton, the only one of the preachers in the College Chapel who seemed to understand the ferment of crude thought and bewilderment of mind in which many of us found ourselves. Lightfoot and Westcott, though still at Cambridge, and at the prime of their power, were somehow aloof from us. I remember, however, a sermon from A. J. Mason, on the purely religious side of Chapel worship, almost the only utterance during those important years which gave any of us the feeling that we were listening to a man to whom the belief in the Divine Presence was vividly real. A remarkable difference between those times and the University life of to-day lies in the fact that no whisper of any social problems, or of demands on us for work among the poor, ever reached our ears. I cannot remember that either of us were asked for a single subscription to any philanthropic object the whole time of our residence. It is probable that one benefit resulted: we were spared the feeble illusion of supposing that a talkative and vicarious interest in East London was a compensation for losing the Gospel of Christ.

Alfred's attitude towards all this was in the highest degree characteristic but not unique. He felt instinctively that there was as much to be said in favour of the beliefs in which he had been brought up as there was to be said against them.

It would, however, be a great mistake to interpret this as meaning that he clung to traditional beliefs from indolence of mind or timidity. He simply expressed what he saw was a fact, and made up his mind to have nothing whatever to do with any probings. The truth seems to me to be that there was at all times in Alfred, and especially in his religious beliefs, a large element of what is called the sub-conscious. His life gives the picture of one who by degrees brought more of his fundamental convictions so to speak nearer to the surface; nearer to the stage at which they should be formulated and defended; but at the time of his early manhood he felt no doubt that he was quite unprepared to defend them against any ready logician,



and that was a sufficient reason why they should not be discussed.

By February and March in 1876 Alfred was already well established in the Cambridge life, dividing his time between work, athletics, and talk. He took up tennis and outstripped all his contemporaries at once. Edward remembers how rapidly Alfred passed him in this game, and how on an early occasion he realised that with great skill Alfred was allowing him to win. Alfred's generosity in all competition was characteristic. His prowess at football was immediately recognised, and in his first year he was playing for the University. His brother Robert writes :

He took up the Association Game, and got to the top of the tree as a centre forward, and more than once was chosen to play in what in those days was the great match of the year, England against Scotland.

He writes to Mary in February :

UNIVERSITY PITT CLUB,  
13th February 1876.

MY DEAR MARY,—I postponed writing till Sunday, having had a very busy week, thinking to write you a good letter on that day, when on Saturday night appeared my old enemy, the colic, and lasted partly from its own virulence, partly from the impossibility of getting anything to right it, fourteen hours, reducing me to a perfect wreck. Hence if I am grubous<sup>1</sup> in tone you will excuse it. I really would

<sup>1</sup> *Glynnese Glossary*: 'Grubous.'—A term perhaps derived, according to a common analogy, from its own sound or aspect when written. It appears properly to mean dingy, discoloured, mud-water like. But custom seems mainly to confine its use to these appearances when produced by trifling or temporary indisposition.

give anything, go upon any diet, to secure myself from these increasing frequent attacks, coming on as they do without warning of any kind ; for instance, I was in absolutely perfect health at luncheon time, as absolutely floored three hours afterwards ; the luncheon consisting of bread and butter ; this is puzzling. What a troll about myself and maladies. I give you my blessing for your charming present ; of all the pieces of music I have lately seen I most coveted that. Well, old girl, things (barring the colic) have gone radiantly this term. I feel that in getting back to dear old history subjects, in beginning Political Economy, and above all in the sense of homeliness at Cambridge which is developing, that I have taken out a new lease. I was cheery enough on the whole last term, when reading was more or less distasteful, but now the future seems hopeful for bringing joyousness. Nobody accepts more than I do the truth of what you said about religion : it is sanguine to suppose that all can go smoothly in the greatest of all subjects, that no difficulty will occur to me when so much presents or has presented itself to hundreds of great, good, and wise men. That which you said of the feeling of resistance, while one is amidst it, to the spirit of scepticism, and conversely, the inclination perhaps to rebut with irritation the over-sweeping fiat of some is most true, but don't fear my acquiescing in sneers, I never will be guilty of that. I think of seeing you again with infinite pleasure. I wonder if I shall in the next six weeks ; should I not, you will nevertheless know that you are often in my thoughts. Uncle William's speech was fine and splendidly candid.<sup>1</sup>—Ever affectionately yours,

A. L.

Another sorrow, his father's death, was at this time approaching, though he makes no allusion to it. Any one who has followed thus far the story of Alfred's life will realise that his father played in it a very great part. Lord Lyttelton set a high calling

<sup>1</sup> On the Andrassy Note and Crimean War.

before each of his sons, and the desire to please him and the knowledge of his unfailing sympathy was a constant stimulus. Edward writes of these last few weeks :

My father had for many years been subject to recurrent attacks of acute melancholia, which we all believe now might have been prevented by rational dietetics. The difficulty was his impatience of anything medical, and refusal to adopt precautions. Early in 1876 it was thought advisable to try a foreign trip, and with Sybella and Charles he went to Rome. But the gloom of his great and slowly overmastering depression of spirit and increasing restlessness made the trip a time of grievous trial to Sybella, and nobly it was borne. He went to Hagley, and then to London, getting steadily worse. The record of his last days, preserved by our sister Lucy, is a wonderful picture of unfaltering religious faith in the midst of an overwhelming darkness. He had no delusion but all true perplexities were exaggerated, and he was beset with the fear of being burdensome to other people and losing his power of useful work.

The last few weeks must have been a dreadful strain on those about him, the fruitless effort to cheer him or to distract him, the constant haunting fear of worse to come. He could not be left alone, and in turn the sons and daughters would try to help him. Lucy writes :

Yet through all, what gentleness, patience and affection : what faith in God ! . . . At one terrible moment he said, ' I may say for myself that never, whatever has befallen me, have I been tempted to repine.' . . .

All tried to combat his self-reproach and his gloom. Lucy records that she said to him :

‘You know we are only preaching to you what all our lives long you have taught us,’ and he said, almost smiling, ‘Yes—of their scholars they shall learn their own forgotten lore.’<sup>1</sup> I recalled to him once, when he was in great distress, all he had done for us, and especially for the boys, by his loving spirit and constant example, and his ceaseless prayers for us: and for a moment it seemed to cheer him.

On Tuesday in Easter Week, though he had been able to attend all the Easter services, the end came.

So [writes Edward] passed away a singularly noble man. It may be doubted if through the long years of his loving toil in the service of his country, and through his home life, rich with strong religious faith, self-discipline and buoyant mirth, he ever set so supreme an example of unselfishness and trust in God, as during those terrible weeks before the end. Certain it is that all his children learnt in early days how immeasurable was the debt owed to him for giving to us the beacon light of his character as we entered on the slippery paths of youth in our life’s journeying.

Edward Talbot, as always in the sorrows and trials of his family, was a help to every one. He seems to have felt especially for the youngest—Alfred—knowing well what a storm of miserable questioning would be aroused in his mind.

Mary Gladstone went down to Hagley with the rest, for the funeral, and shared a room with Lavinia. They could not sleep, and Lavinia thought of her youngest brother alone in his tower room, and

<sup>1</sup> *Christian Year* for Easter Tuesday.

wondered how he was battling out his second meeting with the mystery of suffering and of Death. She was possessed by the feeling that he might be haunted, and longing for a helping hand. At last Mary went up to him, found him sleepless and miserable, and brought him down to rest upon the sofa in their room.

He had soon to go back and take up his work at Cambridge, and Edward Talbot, his heart full of admiration for the noble influence which had just been withdrawn, wrote Alfred a long letter urging upon him and his brothers to raise a memorial to their father by reproducing his fine qualities. He specially mentioned Lord Lyttelton's devotional life—'so valuable in its testimony because it is a thing against which Englishmen are apt to rebel, and to be impatient of it, or to think of it as a thing for women and clergy.'

Alfred's reply shall be given in full :

UNIVERSITY PITT CLUB,  
*Wednesday.*

MY DEAR WARDEN,—I must thank you greatly for your letter ; the strong definite tone that runs through it is wonderfully bracing and will help me greatly, *has*, I hope, indeed, helped me. I have kept the letter which you wrote me when I entered upon the ' free and joyous undergraduate life,' as you then said, and now that another great sorrow has come, another great chance seems to present itself of striking out into other and perhaps higher walks. I feel that I ought not to let it slip without making the effort. Just now it is very hard to do anything but work stubbornly at the most dismal of subjects, work which after next week will probably extend itself to the Sundays, upon which I

would gladly turn at any rate for some time during them to books, which I will leave you to recommend, though I should find no difficulty in discovering them. As soon as this vile examination is over I will make a rule of reading at any rate an hour of some Sunday book. Of course now I read in bed on Sunday something on theology, apart from the Bible, indeed bed seems to be about the only place in which I do read anything except mathematics. I am aided in this uphill work by the thought of doing what I know he loved us to do, and though success can never be what it was when you knew that the obtaining it was giving Papa a new lease of spirits for an almost comically long time, considering the smallness of the achievement, yet the feeling of following his example so nobly offered, in some way takes its place. But *his* devotional life, it seems impossible for me to attempt to follow. Don't think, my dear man, for a moment that I think it the part of women or clergy. I know it to be the part of great and noble minds to be thus devotional, but I have not the mind, and is it good to force the inclination? I know you will despise that question, but it occurs to me, and must be asked.

I must go now. I will only tell you that I shall never forget you in those terrible days, your tender shielding care of Lavinia and me, your energy and self-sacrifice, the many beautiful thoughts and prayers you suggested, which did so much eventually to drive out the desperate thoughts that I had, for all these and much more I owe you such great thanks.—Yours ever affectionately,

ALFRED LYTTTELTON.

Alfred never dropped the habit of reading some religious book on Sundays. This was the more remarkable that he was not deeply interested in theological questions, nor did mystical books seem to hold any special message for him. But it was all part of the discipline of his life; he



had made a resolve, a promise, and he kept it. Nor was it irksome to him ; on the contrary, the deep wells of his nature were replenished by his religious observances, and all through his days the influence of his home training subsisted and held him, comforted him in his griefs, and taught him how to die.

The break up of the life at Hagley was inevitable. Charles had to take up his succession. Sybella decided to settle in London, and after a time built a small country house near her old home in Herefordshire. Alfred determined to do everything in his power to brighten her life, and when he left Cambridge lived with her in London. He writes to her from Cambridge :

It is very good of you to say what you did about the plan of Edward and me living with you ; we ought all to try very hard, though to me it will be a congenial task, to keep up the old unity which has been so much endangered by our great loss. Apart from your unvarying kindness and affection to myself and all of us, your tender love and care of Papa in the darkest as in the brightest days of the seven last years of his life would alone be enough to make the eight sons rally round you without his distinct charge.—Yours ever affectionately,

ALFRED LYTTTELTON.

This is meant only for you.

Alfred inherited from his father a sum which only brought him in £160 a year, and from that time and until he could earn money he owed much to Sybella's help.

To Lavinia Alfred wrote also from Cambridge, later on in the year :

It was a blow when the time came, going away from Hagley just as you were coming, as well as for the sake of the old place, towards which I still feel as to the old home, though admitting and feeling acutely what you said about the constant expectation of seeing Papa come in, poke about the books in some top shelf, put the one you are reading back in its place, hit the bass of the pianoforte if you were playing, with the palm of his hand, or perform some act of fun and spirits, which seem to have gone out with him from most of us.

Alfred writes to Sybella :

I suppose you have heard of the great break that Arthur Balfour has prepared for Edward and me in his offer of a little lodge seven miles from Strathcona in the extreme Highlands, a beautiful moor, lots of grouse, salmon and a stray deer. Edward and I will be there for about a month from August till the beginning of September. We shall do a good lot of reading and lay in health for a twelvemonth—I hope you are having a nice tranquil time at Perrystone.<sup>1</sup> I wish so very much, my dear Sybella, that we could do something for you, some little thing to supply in however poor a degree the immense gap which is necessarily more constantly present to you than anybody else.

The month at Dalbreac was a great success. He writes to Mary :

The journey to Scotland was incomparable for beauty ; third class (vilest economy in the world) in 90 in the shade, approaches nearer to physical pain than a very heavy kick on the leg at football, or a cricket ball in the eye. The sight of Lavinia was like Champagne ; throughout our visit here,

<sup>1</sup> Perrystone belonged to Mrs. Clive, Lady Lyttelton's mother.

neither the book work, the grouse, or the stags have been so really congenial and delightful as some dear old family gossips with her and the Warden. My word ! we did make a remark or so upon men and things. . . . The visit on the whole, as I look back upon it, undoubtedly repays itself ; drawbacks there were : sitting in a room which always smelt of peat, with the door open, preventing smoke from the chimney, but admitting the sound of clanging pans and the stinks varied and manifold, ranging from Whisky to boiled venison, which emanated from the kitchen ; ringing with unfailing regularity for the same necessities, as unfailingly forgotten by our factotum ; invariably getting soaked to the skin when we went grouse shooting—not always productive of grouse, but quite always of irritation in some part of the day. These and other hitches marred to a certain degree, though they do not by any means obliterate, the recollection of great beauty of scenery, considerable progress in reading, much acquisition of health, wonderful fun and pleasure with Lavinia and the Warden, and occasional keen delight in sport. The study too of the Balfours was interesting and pleasurable, also the getting still better acquainted with Arthur, who not having, owing to his brother's presence, the obligation of arguing paradoxically, but rather of restraining such, is as uniformly delightful as any man I know.

In November he is back in Cambridge again, and writes once more to Mary giving an account of his visit to the home of his friend St. John Brodrick :

UNIVERSITY PITT CLUB,  
12th November 1876.

This is the evening I usually devote to seeing those friends I do not meet in the course of the week, but it is raining and dismal outside, and there is a friend nearer to me than almost any one here, whom I do not and shall not, I fear, see for many Sundays, so I sit down for a chat with you, feeling how long it is since I have had one. Since I last wrote not

very much has happened of note ; my visit to Brodrick was as usual a great success. I should have gone to Hawarden though in September, I think, if I had not seen that Miss Gladstone, whom I afterwards discovered was Helen, but thought was you, was accompanying Uncle William. I certainly enjoyed life there (Peper Harow) very much. My friend has come on immensely in his year at Oxford, and it is very pleasing to find matter of general interest taking the place of school politics in conversations that are long and frequent. So often one finds that after separation for some time with an Eton friend, when old school topics have lost their interest, that there is nothing to replace them, and intimacy is dropped, but with old Brodrick I find I am as much in harmony as ever I was when we together battled against rowdism at Eton. I have been working like a Briton this term, writing a good deal—two historical essays, and one for a debating society about the Church, all done for practice in expression rather than for attempted originality. My coach in mathematics said that I ought to have got through in them last term, consequently I shall have very ill luck if I do not pass pretty easily now. I don't mind mathematics for an hour or two in the day ; it was only when they engaged my whole time that I found them so intolerable. Acting takes up a little time just now, nothing serious, but I don't think I should have undertaken it had not Sturgis refused to act unless I did, and he is wonderfully good, and if I did not think any public performance rather wholesome for the nerves.

The difficult thing to describe in a letter, and yet the thing which is above all important in life here, is the social element. It is not difficult to steer clear in society of commissive sins, but it is wonderfully hard to prevent some evil remaining behind from the jostling with cynical, unbelieving folk. There is a cynicism here which recognizes sins which I would not mention to you (as a preacher said the other day) as a necessary and inevitable result of a complex civilization, and which not merely palliates, but applauds selfishness as an organized theory. In arguing

against such opinions you feel the hopelessness of convincing, unless there is some recognition of a model life. Nothing shows to one more completely how necessary Christ and the Church are, than the attempt to convince any one who is immoral or selfish that immorality and selfishness are base and degraded. Without the aid of some mutually recognized ideal the task is utterly vain. But I would much rather talk of these things with you than write them, at present. Good-bye.—Your ever affectionate A. L.

In December he writes :

Five minutes ago a bland tutor of Trinity informed me, as I sat perspiring with apprehension, that all was right in the matter of the Little-go. Nothing has happened to me since I came here which has given one half the relief and exhilaration I experience now.

The honours Little-go had indeed been a nightmare to him. Edward says :

He shared in ample measure the family incapacity for mathematics—it must be remembered too that in the Eton of our time, though the sixth-form boys were supposed to do three hours of mathematics in the week, scarcely any of us did a single sum for the last two years of our school life. We trusted to the magical power of ‘Big Smith,’ the well-known coach at Cambridge, and in the long run we did not trust in vain. In spite however of the rich geniality, real friendliness and admirable teaching of this great guide of the bewildered, Alfred passed through a long period of distress and anxiety in wrestling with Trigonometry and Mechanics when he had never had the foundation of Algebra, or even arithmetic, securely laid. Not till January 1877 was he launched on a most enjoyable and profitable time of hard reading, splendid athletic success and thoroughly congenial society.



In May Alfred writes to Lavinia about his brother's success :

Edward's scholarship was the greatest break I have had since the Little-go ; this seems perhaps not saying very much, but that was a great thing, and the feeling in each case was one of intense relief more than anything else. Till I had begun in the last two or three days before the scholarships were out to think seriously of the matter, I had not realised to the full how a failure to get one on Edward's part would mean that he had really wasted, in all save the habit of application gained, the last three or four years. Of course there is a good deal to be said against a classical education at any time, but an unsuccessful one is indeed to be lamented. All these feelings the announcement of old Blore<sup>1</sup> in the tennis court most joyously dissipated. I have a terrible deal to do this term. What really sunny little intervals those are at Falconhurst,<sup>2</sup> wonderfully jolly to look back upon ; it would be a good thing, I often think, if I had more of those quiet calm bright pleasures without excitement or competition, things which I find make me glare at old Stubbs' well-filled pages with fixed eyes but wandering thoughts.

In August 1877 Alfred went as Marshal on circuit with Mr. Justice Brett, afterwards Lord Esher, and he sends an account of it to his cousin :

I had begun a letter to you once before but left off, partly in idleness, partly with the idea of giving you a full account of the circuit when it was over. And now we have come to the last evening, alas ! of what has been a right good time ; lost indeed utterly as regards reading for my tripos, but profitable, I am sure ; very much as a leaf cut brand-new and fresh from another experience. I have worked as hard as I could, sitting in court all day from 10 till 6, listening and generally getting the old boys to discuss the case after-

<sup>1</sup> Rev. E. W. Blore, tutor at Trinity.

<sup>2</sup> His sister Meriel Talbot's home in Kent.



wards to a considerable extent. This is very useful with respect to the future: their criticism on the conduct of a case gives one very good notions of what is good and what is bad in advocacy. Nor, regarding it as intellectual exercise, can it be reckoned amiss to canvass and criticize legal matters.

It is quite impossible not to get fond of both my judges, whom one begins to look upon as *pro-tempore* parents, and who have indeed been wonderfully kind and jolly towards me. Of course they are utterly different in character. Brett, a man of the fashionable world, full of all sorts of stories (all good almost), but filling us with admiration on the bench, the most difficult case unravelling under his hands. I am sure that in a big criminal case no one could be better either for perfect lucidity or for dramatic or graphic power in summoning a scene to the imagination most truthfully and vividly. Fitzjames is not nearly so effective as a judge—he sees too many sides and sometimes puzzles the juries by trying to be too elaborate. I take myself in these matters as a specimen of the rather superior class of jurymen, knowing well enough that when I am puzzled as to how to give a verdict they will be too. He is very greatly to be admired—not nearly so bitter in his religious opinions, which he unfolded at great length to me in a long *tête-à-tête* walk, as you would think, though every now and then he makes irritating remarks about the clergy. He likes teaching immensely and is never tired of haranguing us, provided the old Lord Justice is away, who of course prevents any such monologue.

In January 1878 Alfred went to stay at Hawarden to meet Mr. Ruskin and Lord Acton, and enjoyed there a few days of stimulating talk and intercourse. He writes from Cambridge to Mary :

I don't think I shall ever forget those days at Hawarden; if one had many such it would entirely spoil one for the coarser world. This is a good place to come to after it; there

is absolute repose, and I am getting through quantities of work. But three days of such talk as we listened to last week do more for our brains as well as our hearts than many of book work.

The following letter to Lavinia gives some account of this visit :

UNIVERSITY PITT CLUB,  
*26th January 1878.*

MY DEAR LAVINIA,—It was a great break getting your letter certifying good health or at any rate approaching good health and speaking just like yourself. I was just going to write, and have sent to Keble in honour of the baby, and your birthday, which is somewhere in January I know, a little cream jug, not silver, bought in Chester, the shape of which I like and which I shall like to fancy coming in sometimes with your five-o'clock tea. In a few years' time, if we live, you must entrust the extremely serious task to me of impressing firmly upon your little son the necessity in life of a loosely hung arm, the possession of which has been to his uncles the means of baffling many such as the renowned 'Palin' who have overthrown his father in prime of youth. It was like a change from Sparta to Athens going to Hawarden; you know we might read for many days without getting a tithe of the wonderful stimulus which a night or so of that most brilliant and ideal talk imparted. It makes the world seem coarse and commonplace to have lived in that circle; none the less it sent you out feeling many inches taller in mind. Ruskin talked to Mary and me all the evening, listening first to me playing, and winding up with Mary, and all about marriage; it was one of the most pathetic things I ever heard, we knowing how his home had been shattered. It is unfair to repeat his talk, for it loses so infinitely and seems bald in any one else's hands: but his view was I take it rather the old chivalric one, that it was the first duty of manhood, and that a man who has not been in love cannot have attained the completest benefit of life. He is very shy, but does not show it, telling Holland how he was shivering before coming in first. You know he

only appeared for short bits of the day, meals, and five-o'clock tea, except once for talk on novels with Lord Acton and Mary and me, and to listen to Mary's playing. But I will tell you lots more if I see you as I hope, some time this term at Oxford. But I have been monstrously long, and writing about Ruskin is disheartening and inadequate work. Old Edward and I very happy in the appointment of a man in every way worthy to the mastership at Eton.<sup>1</sup>

Bless you, dear little woman, ever yr. aff.

A. L.

Not very long afterwards Mr. Ruskin took Alfred to see Mr. Carlyle, and Mary Gladstone made him sit down at once in Harley Street, where the Gladstones were then living, and write the following description :

21st July 1878.

To-day Mr. Ruskin took me to see Carlyle. Mr. Ruskin had prepared me to expect a very old man, not very smooth in temper, nor did he lead me to hope that I should hear much in the way of dialogue between them, for, when less infirm, Carlyle had rarely taken a successful part in dialogue, seizing the bit of conversation very much between his teeth, and either sustaining it alone, or else remaining silent. I asked Mr. Ruskin if he knew the reason of the gulf which had ever seemed to be fixed between Macaulay and Carlyle, but his reply that the former expressed the convictions of a party only, while the latter spoke world's truths, was perhaps not completely satisfactory.

We were shown into a pretty room, pictures of some of his heroes hung round—Frederick the Great beating a drum (the only sign of militarism which seemed very antipathetic to him in youth), Cromwell, Luther, and others, with several of himself. A few minutes after, Carlyle came down; he looked very infirm and his hand trembled excessively, while at first he groaned and sighed a good deal, receiving kindly enough however Ruskin's kiss, most tenderly given. He greeted me civilly. His face was far finer than his pic-

<sup>1</sup> S. R. James.

tures had led me to hope. Not one of them have seized the wonderfully deep stamp of pathos, which was the most abiding characteristic of his look, as I saw him. (Millais, said Ruskin afterwards, referring to his picture of Carlyle, may represent the pathos of a moment, he cannot show the pathos of a lifetime.)

We sat down, and I thought at first that beyond the great interest of seeing him, not much was to be gained; for the first five or ten minutes Mr. Ruskin anxiously humoured his feeble querulous talk of the heat, and the wretched fatigue from a drive to the East End, and the ill effects of a 'great drench of champagne' which Mary Aitken his niece had given him.

But soon he gently led him to the much loved topic of Burns, 'one of whose odes is worth an eternity of these poets,' including in these Patmore, who had been mentioned rather contemptuously as 'one who wrote poems on Cathedrals and Cathedral Closes.' It was very delightful to see the brilliant smile and to hear the rough loud laugh with which he greeted a Burns quotation which Ruskin made. It was about a girl simulating sleep in order to get a kiss from her lover—the smile lit up his rugged old face wonderfully and banished utterly the look of pathos. 'Dizzy an accursed being, the worst man that ever lived, if lies are sin, who with all the strength of his cunning has tried to get this country into war and for the Turk.' 'And what the deevil is the Turk but to be sent out.' 'A profoundly uninteresting controversy, this war between Russia and Turkey.'

To a friend Alfred added the further interesting commentary on the interview: 'The old man never addressed a word to me till we were leaving, when he suddenly said: "Does the rising generation read me?"—a question which I felt it difficult to answer, although it represented obviously his chief interest in the rising generation.'

After playing at Lord's against Oxford, Alfred allowed himself practically no further holiday in view of the Tripos impending in December. He went to Cambridge for the Long Vacation term, and kept rigid hours, reading every morning till one o'clock ; playing college matches till six—and, after an hour's post-prandial talk, working from nine till midnight. It was characteristic, says a contemporary, of Alfred throughout his early life that his organisation seemed to come to a halt at about midnight, and he consequently directed ribald shafts at any one who tried to terminate the sitting before that hour, while denouncing as a roysterer any 'convive' who in the enthusiasm of an unfinished talk proposed to sit beyond it.

But during this period Stubbs and Green took the place of late discussions, and he almost emulated Edward in parcelling out his time. Eschewing countless invitations to country houses, Alfred went from Cambridge to a reading party at Cromer, sharing with St. John Brodrick a portion of the house of his friend J. W. Clark. 'Here for several weeks he made a high average of reading, finding however, to his great disgust, that the fine air made after-dinner work a struggle, even though the hospitality of the most noted host in Cambridge had been curbed in the interest of study.'

From Cromer he writes to his friend George Curzon, still a boy at Eton :

BRUNSWICK HOUSE,  
CROMER, *August '78.*

MY DEAR GEORGE,—I have been very hard at work for ten days, perhaps doing better in that way than I ever have



before : so I feel that I deserve my Sunday which shall be really slack ; the day is gloomy which makes rather indifferent the humour of our party. I think I shall regain cheerfulness if I can fancy myself talking with you, old boy, over a too sumptuous tea in the most comfortable of Eton rooms, the curtains drawn, and the much enduring fags dismissed. Perhaps too you will write back and tell me the sort of things which I liked hearing so much when I came to Eton—you must tell me lots about yourself, where you have been, and if you have recovered spirits. I was quite taken out of<sup>1</sup> at seeing the traces which much dejection had left on you, my shapely boy, though those feelings in you strengthened the bond of friendship to me by showing community of opinion. I can't bear to think of your not being at Eton when I go down—I fear it will make it different. One thing I want you to do before going to Oxford is to take stock carefully of your present opinions and aims, and after a year's life there compare the realisation of your aims with your intention. It may possibly be mortifying, but it is quite sure to be wholesome. I am very keen for you to do very well up there, and to disappoint Broadbent if he imagines you shallow—and I want you not to lose your keen enjoyment of simple pleasures, for it is a wonderfully useful faculty to possess, and some lose it without knowing what they lose.

But I wonder why I should write all these things to you who most likely know far more than I do what is good for yourself. The inscription<sup>2</sup> you put in the book which

<sup>1</sup> *Glynnese Glossary*. . . . It means the painful sensation, which most people must have felt, as if some part actually was taken out of one's stomach : the slight faintness or sickness produced by witnessing something unpleasant and trying. . . . Often may it be heard, amidst torrents of other Glynnese mysteries, in the interminable domestic confabulations between Mrs. Gladstone and Lady Lyttelton. The naughtiness of a child, or still more to punish or to see a child punished, takes out of them grievously : as also any inter-menial uproar, and to have to reprimand any favoured or formidable servant, as . . .

<sup>2</sup> George Curzon had given him a book in which he wrote :

A. L.

Inter amicos amicissimo

d d.

G. N. C.



delighted me far more than I can say has made me venture—some perhaps—but, after all, the friendship and the duty of equals one to another is very important here, and the sense of it makes me yarn on in this prosaic fashion. It will be a great pleasure to me to hear from you—Tit (C. A. C. Ponsonby), that most faithless of boys, never answered my consolatory epistle. I wonder if he got it.—Bless you, old boy, ever your affectionate

ALFRED LYTTTELTON.

He was filled with anxiety as to the result of his Tripos.

The Tripos [he writes to Mary] weighs on me. I shouldn't mind at all if people didn't think I was going to do well: but that makes going for it horrible, as success will not please them, and failure will disappoint.

Before his final term at Cambridge he attended his brother Charles's wedding, a venture on the part of their eldest brother, which to the bachelors ranging from twenty-one to thirty-five seemed almost as formidable as leading an expedition to the North Pole. The idea of matrimony was indeed at that time so foreign to Alfred, that on the following afternoon he suddenly halted in the middle of a walk with a friend and exclaimed, 'Good Heavens! what can Charles and Mary be finding to talk about after being shut up together for twenty-four hours?'

Edward writes of him about this period :

On the intellectual side he must have been influenced by his inclusion in the very select coterie known as the Apostles. This circle or club, often alluded to in biographies of men who afterwards became eminent, was composed not simply of young men of superfine abilities, but of those

who not only possessed keen interest in speculative questions but were also ready to express their thoughts to others. Speaking as an outsider, I should say this qualification was among the most important : at least I can remember some men of great mental power who were not chosen for the Apostleships apparently for no reason except a certain want of readiness in discussion. But along with this element it seems to have been felt that there was a danger of exclusiveness, and that the tone of the group might become too much divorced from ordinary ways of thinking, unless there was an element in the club of young men of the world, able to contribute not so much of philosophy as common sense. It was in the latter capacity no doubt that Alfred was elected, and as there was an obligation of secrecy resting on the members, nothing very definite can be said either as to the discussions or as to their effect on him. I think it was towards the end of his third year that he joined, and there is reason to think that at this time his speeches, though probably less copious, were not more crude than those of others. But while it appears that he did not attach great importance to the influence of the discussions on his mind, it can hardly have been insignificant. To have to stand up and discourse on such a subject as æsthetics or ethics—started by the late Stephen Spring-Rice—before the ablest men in Cambridge, most of them older by two, three, or more years than himself, must have been a searching ordeal, especially for one who with a great appreciation for intellectual brilliancy combined a singular distaste for analysis in matters abstract. But whether his ardour as an Apostle was somewhat cool because he found other ways of expending brain effort more profitable, or because he felt that abstract discussion was not his line, or because he found the destructive element too strong and the constructive almost wholly absent or wholly unintelligible, I think it is true to say that he did not allow the influence of these discussions to tell permanently upon his mind.

To his great disappointment Alfred only succeeded in getting a second class in the Tripos. He

worked very hard during the last year, and in spite of many misgivings had hoped to get a first. He writes about his failure to Mary Gladstone, having previously poured out his feelings in a letter to Lavinia, in which he says :

Failure of any sort to one of my composition is perhaps a *moral* gain, but I could have wished it had been anything else, say in some social or athletic matter—in these a slap in the face would have done me no harm : but intellectual self-confidence was never my weakness, I think, and it is unquestionably an advantage in many circumstances : it has not as you imagine been fortified by the second class.

To Mary :

I would have written to you while I was at Hagley only I had such a quantity of letters to answer, all on the same benumbing topic, that no energy to write more remained to me. You would have written, I think, if you had known what a solace the benumbers<sup>1</sup> were : notwithstanding that I had been disciplining myself for months beforehand, not all the philosophy that I could muster could prevent the reality being worse than the anticipation. It is foolish to judge of oneself wholly by an examination, but it is quite impossible not to do so at first, for as a young man it is the only test you have : afterwards, of course it is different, when you have other chances of proving your mettle then you can afford to laugh at such things. However, all confidence is for a time utterly shaken, and thus it was that I felt very keenly and perhaps looked rather eagerly for kind things, and indeed a very great number of people wrote them to me : it is almost worth while sustaining a disaster to prove this kindness which by most is reserved for the

<sup>1</sup> *Glynnese Glossary*.—To suggest any exact etymology for this queer expression is evidently impossible ; but perhaps the origin of it is the idea of torpor and stillness, and impassibility to outward things, such as that of a dormouse in winter, which in a measure seems to be appropriate to the time in question (*i.e.* times of mourning).

tomb. . . . I have said to Lavinia that it speaks volumes for little Mary [Mary Lyttelton, his eldest brother's wife], that I was so very happy at Hagley, notwithstanding all this and the somewhat exasperating, though doubtless wholesome, attitude of some of the family towards my failure—it is singular how abundant in criticism some are who as youths have never for one day put their backs under the industrial yoke—indeed, all you say about her is wonderfully true: much has been added to Hagley, and nothing, I think, taken away.

Thus in 1878 Alfred left Cambridge famous for his athletics, and widely loved by all conditions of men, but with an inner sense of failure and mistrust of his own powers. Nor was he consoled by the Warden of Merton's observation that he shared the distinction of a second class with all his Eton friends, including his brother Edward, R. Farrer, St. John Brodrick, and subsequently George Curzon. The Warden observed, 'Differing as they did in powers, industry, and prospects, they had all enjoyed too much society at an early age.'

## CHAPTER IV

### CRICKET AND TENNIS

*Compiled by a friend from notes by the Hon. R. Lyttelton and others.*

#### THE CRICKET BALL SINGS

Give me the batsman who squanders his force on me,  
Crowding the strength of his soul in a stroke ;  
Perish the muff and the little tin Shrewsbury,  
Meanly contented to potter and poke.  
He who would pleasure me, he must do doughtily,—  
Bruises and buffetings stir me like wine.  
Giants, come all, do your worst with the ball,  
Sooner or later you're mine, sirs, you're mine.  
  
Pour on us torrents of light, good Sun,  
Shine in the hearts of my cricketers, shine ;  
Fill them with gladness and might, good Sun,  
Touch them with glory, O Brother of mine,  
Brother of mine,  
Brother of mine !  
We are the lords of them, Brother and Mate :  
I but a little ball, thou but a Great.

E. V. LUCAS.

To record the life of a man who was so great a master of all games without something more than a cursory reference to positions won in the athletic world, would leave out much which when reinforced by character and temperament helps an athlete, more perhaps than any but the greatest lights in other professions, to influence his fellow-men. ' Even games,' as Arthur Balfour once told the St. Andrews Golf Club on a festive occasion, ' are not to be regarded as wholly serious,' but few soldiers, and still fewer statesmen, have ever been as well-known

figures with the public or weighed in the balance so keenly as W. G. Grace or Archer. When such heroes, whose much canvassed personalities form the ideal of the rising generation, are of fine metal they become a national asset.

From early days Alfred's brilliance of style at cricket, as at football, produced on the crowd, after the steadiness of an orthodox player, the same effect as the rising of Mr. Gladstone did on the House of Commons after a speech by Sir Stafford Northcote. He became as great a favourite with the masses as his renowned uncle.

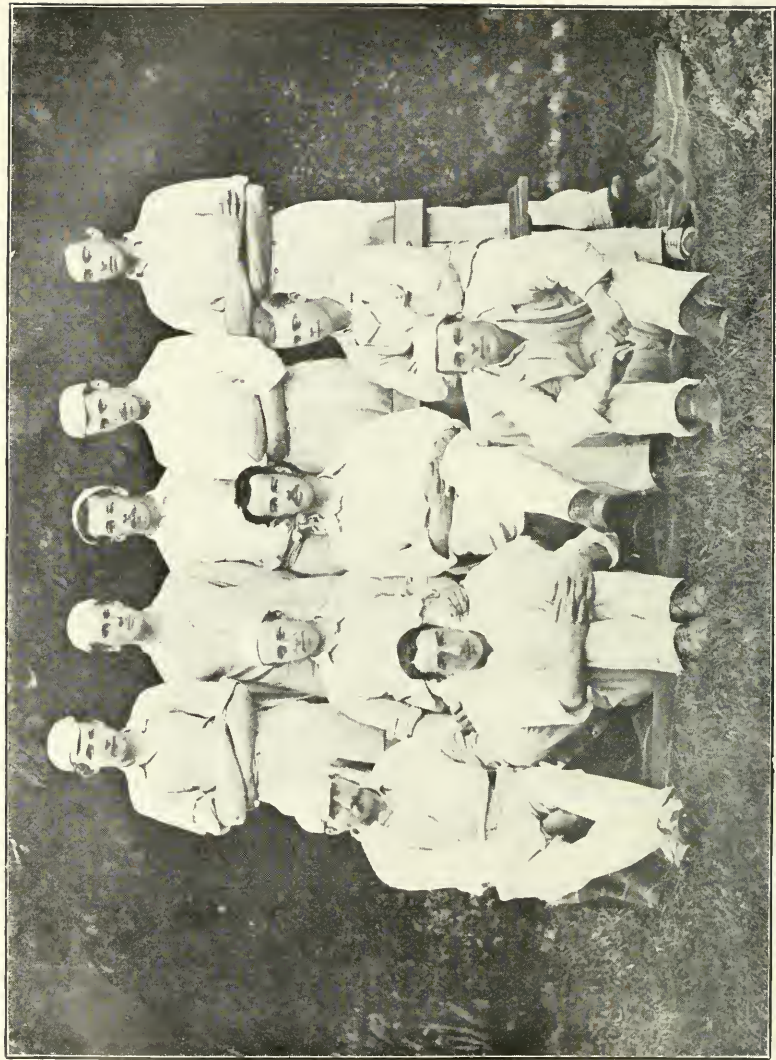
Alfred's history as a cricketer dates from the early days at Brighton to which allusion has already been made. He attained prominence in 'Sixpenny' as soon as he went to Eton, and at the age of twelve successfully tackled the fast and dangerous bowling of a lower-boy terror known as 'Red Haigh.' From the first he adopted the style of play which R. A. H. Mitchell, himself a fine driver and famous leg hitter, impressed on Eton for a generation; but what to others came as the result of apprenticeship came to Alfred naturally. He revelled in forward play, and his stroke, even when defending his wicket against straight balls, was so hard that the ball frequently travelled to the long field. He was a brilliant batter all round before the wicket, and seldom missed a leg ball. Hence, as he developed accuracy and confidence, he became the most attractive batsman in England to watch. Many players have had more patience; some, like W. G. Grace, greater capacity for smothering



awkward balls ; a few greater command when well set. But take him all round, Alfred, as his physique developed, was the most useful member any team could wish for. He was a fine field and fast runner, long thrower and a sure catch, and enjoyed fielding 'in the country.' In 1874 he took up wicket-keeping, simply because a wicket-keeper had to be found for the Eton eleven, although he had not the proper build or figure for a wicket-keeper, being tall and not over strong in the back, so that the constant stooping tired him. Though he began wicket-keeping only the year before he left Eton, he became in twelve months as good an amateur wicket-keeper as could be found in England. In later years he used to say he belonged rather to the class of catchers than stumpers ; he did not keep his hands as close to the wicket as Blackham or Pinder, but was supreme at getting the wicket down however wildly the ball was thrown in.

Alfred's cricket years ranged from 1872 to 1887. He played four years for Eton, 1872 to 1875, and captained Eton in the last year. From 1876 to 1879 he played for Cambridge, being a member of the two great elevens of 1878, when Edward was captain, and 1879, when he was captain himself, neither of which were defeated in any match. Soon after he went to Cambridge he became in great request for the matches between Gentlemen and Players, and for England against the Australians ; and made 66 against Players when he was twenty, and 72 against the Australians the following year. He played for Middlesex up to 1884, when the Bar





*Photo: Hills & Saunders, Cambridge*

F. W. Kingston.

A. P. Lucas.

Hon. E. Lyttelton.

P. H. Morton.

H. Whitfield.

A. G. Steel.

### CAMBRIDGE XI (1878)

They won no fewer than eight matches, and not a defeat or draw is found against them. They beat Oxford by 238 runs, and the Australians in one innings.

intervened to reduce his appearances in first-class cricket to an occasional holiday match.

To recount the episodes of these fifteen years would fill a volume. It was some time before his contemporaries realised that in a family of such athletic force he was destined to be the most distinguished. Moreover, Eton in the years following 1869, when the team included C. J. Ottaway, Lord Harris, G. Longman, A. S. Tabor, S. E. Butler, and C. J. Maude, all of whom afterwards played in the University match, had a succession of strong teams. Curiously enough Alfred, though a fast wicket was the life of his game, succeeded better in public-school matches on the slower ground at Eton or Winchester than at Lord's. Both in 1874 and 1875 he scored over 100 against Winchester, while at Lord's he never did himself justice till his last year, when he made 59, which fine innings with his generalship were the inspiration of his side and a great factor in winning the match.

But he was seen to the utmost advantage during these years in the trial matches and in the house matches after Lord's. Alfred was very highly strung, and was only at his best when he had gained confidence. In Upper Club, where the visitors' bowling was usually weaker than their batting, he made havoc of the first few overs, and got as firmly set in five minutes as most boys would be when they had been in an hour, and made 40 runs. In house matches he treated all the attacking forces with scant respect, with the exception of F. M. Buckland, the best Eton bowler of his day, and

his standing regret was that you<sup>§</sup> could not run out more than six in Upper Club. He thoroughly realised the dictum of a fellow-cricketer, who was an artist in language, C. J. Thornton: 'I am sure no one would ever get me out, if they knew how much I liked being in.'

The real test of a cricketer comes when he goes to the University; school heroes often fade into a dim mist when pitted against the pick of other schools. A peculiar style which may have inspired a small circle often does not bear to be transplanted. It is not given to every man who has earned fame and a succession of school 'hundreds,' like W. H. Game, by opposing an immobile bat to all bowling while occasionally whisking a loose ball to the ropes, to find his way into the University eleven. Yet, after some repulses, Game got his chance, and no one more than Alfred appreciated the scene in 1876, when, with Oxford in a hopeless minority, this sportsman held his ground over after over and punished every attack, till, retiring with 109 to his credit, he forced the tribute: 'Well, if he had been a fox, I should have been sorry to have killed him.'

No one doubted when Alfred went to Cambridge that he would become one of the foremost players of the day, and the defeat of Oxford in three out of his four years was largely due to him. In 1876 he made 43 and 47 against Oxford, besides making 78 against England and 80 against Surrey. In 1877 he came in for a series of surprises in the Oxford match; his batting, like others, failed in the first



innings, and Cambridge only made 134. Oxford, however, lost six good wickets, including A. J. Webbe, H. R. Webbe, and A. H. Heath, for 31, and as Alfred threw up the ball at the sixth wicket he felt that the upset of the formidable Cambridge batting team was redeemed. At this moment, however, F. M. Buckland was joined by Tylecote, and by magnificent driving put on 117 runs in little more than an hour, one of the finest innings ever played in the University match ; the pair getting 142 before they were separated, completely turned the fortunes of the game. Alfred, who knew Buckland's bowling well and had no reason to fear a team in which there was none better, went in determined to retrieve the day. He quickly made half a dozen, and then saw his way to a great stroke from the Nursery end to the Tavern. The ball, though not fully hit, travelled at a prodigious pace to short leg about two feet from the ground, where Jellicoe, a brother of the famous Admiral, a left-handed bowler who happened to be short-sighted, was fielding. The general belief was that the ball reached Jellicoe's abdomen before he realised it was coming in his direction, but nature triumphed and he clutched at the missile with his right hand, and at whatever cost to himself brought off the catch. The astonishment of Alfred, the fieldsman, and spectators knew no bounds, but Cambridge lost one of her best wickets, something like a rot set in, and Oxford won what was known as 'Buckland's match' by ten wickets. Probably the occasion provided the same feeling in Alfred which he sympathetically



expressed to a junior who had been bowled very painfully off his elbow by a fast full pitch: 'It needed all your philosophy not to say d——n in retaliation for that.'

The years 1878 and 1879 were probably the two greatest in the annals of Cambridge cricket. Neither eleven was ever defeated, and in 1878 the Australian eleven which had beaten county after county was routed by Cambridge in one innings. These were the best cricket years of Edward and Alfred's life. In 1878 Edward played six innings of 53 to 113, the last against the Australians; while Alfred played the best innings of his life against the Australians at Lord's, going in first and knocking off Spofforth, Boyle, Allan, and Garrett, and making 72, which with Morton's fast bowling settled the fate of the match. In 1879 Alfred's score outdid 1878, and he actually won the match against Oxford by a spirited rush to the wicket. Cambridge had a strong eleven and Oxford a weak one; Cambridge all but won in one innings, and only had to get 16 runs to win. Rain threatened, but for some reason P. A. Morton, who went in last in the first innings, was sent in first with Whitfeld, which, considering the threatening appearance of the elements, was an unwise proceeding. Morton was bowled at once; rain not of the gentle sort but a real soak was plainly falling over the East of London, and a strongish wind was bringing it rapidly over Lord's. It really looked like odds on Cambridge being robbed of a victory, but Alfred almost ran to the wicket, lashed out intrepidly at the finest bowling,

and finished the match by scoring the remaining 12 runs in about five minutes, the winning hit being a four. The next minute the rain came down in sheets. The late H. R. Webbe, the Oxford captain, a sportsman and a gentleman every inch of him, said after the match, that notwithstanding the rain he would have continued the match had it been possible: but this would have been out of the question, the rain was so heavy.

The Australians in later years never wholly forgot the cricketer in the Colonial Secretary, although Alfred had not visited Australia, in spite of being strongly pressed to captain the team led by Lord Darnley in 1882. Of his four appearances against the Australians in England, by far the most remarkable was in 1884 at the Oval. The Australians had made 532 runs for six wickets; it was a blazing day, the English team was tired out, the crowd censorious. Every member of the English eleven, including Shrewsbury, for the only time in a first-class match, had bowled. At last Lord Harris called on Alfred as a 'dernier ressort.' With a fast bowler at the other end he kept on his pads and bowled lobs. A miracle ensued. Alfred got the four last wickets, Midwinter, Blackham, Spofforth, and Boyle, in eight overs for eight runs! Blackham was l.b.w. to a lob long hop, and expressed a doubt to I. D. Walker as to whether the ball had pitched straight. I. D. rejoined, 'Straight or not, if a batsman lets a lob long hop hit his leg instead of sending it to the ropes, he deserves to be out,' a sentiment warmly cheered by Mr. Donnell, the well-known Australian,

who heard it. Alfred, it is believed, never got another wicket in first-class cricket in his career, but he enjoyed himself uncommonly on this occasion and got a rare reception on his return to the pavilion.

After 1884 his play in first-class matches was intermittent, though he occasionally represented Middlesex, for which county, with I. D. Walker as a partner, he had in 1882 made 181 at Clifton, helping to add 324 runs to the score, a performance since beaten but still worthy of record.

No mere enumeration of figures would do justice to Alfred's popularity with cricketers and the public. He had a fine temper and loved to see the game well played. A few instances of this may be cited.

Playing against Lancashire, Pilling stumped him by taking one of Crossland's fastest balls between the body and the wicket and getting the bails off like lightning as Alfred's toe rose for an instant from the crease. Many doubted the decision, but as the Lancashire team came to the pavilion after the innings, Alfred crossed to the professionals' entrance to greet Pilling, and pressed £1 into his hand, with a word of congratulation from a brother wicket-keeper which was never forgotten.

Similarly at Lord's in a county match, he turned round and hit a slow bowler to long leg when there was no field. He ran five runs at full speed when the thunderbolt burst. The bail of the wicket from which he started was found to have fallen! Much had passed since the hit, but the umpire ascribed the disturbance to the point of Alfred's huge right

foot, and though the gravest doubts existed, he returned crestfallen to the pavilion. Few men could have faced the situation as he did with a smile.

Væ victis! When he had managed at Clifton to get W. G. Grace out at the wicket twice in a Middlesex-Gloucester match for small scores, he related with gusto the ominous look on the usually genial face of the G.O.M. of cricket as he made his way to the dressing-tent, and the simultaneous departure of the Gloucestershire team from the back of the tent to avoid facing the explosion. Yet to a less favoured opponent in the University match who had succumbed to him he ejaculated, 'We could have spared you 30 or 40 runs, and I should have been pleased if you had got them.'

He was infinitely amused by the excuses and complaints of those who were out of form, as happens to all cricketers at times, and he used to relate an anecdote of dear old Mike (R. A. H. Mitchell) who timed his supper badly in an I Zingari week at the Viceregal Lodge, Dublin, and had 'stoked up' for some hours' dancing just as the band was striking up 'God Save the King.' Next morning 'Mike' was keeping wicket and missed a number of chances. Neither bowling nor wicket was difficult, but he felt bound to account for his failure and remarked to Alfred, 'Do you see all these earth-worms, Alfred? These earth-worms, very confusing.' The elimination of the overnight festivities in favour of this scapegoat formed the climax to his recollection of this much-valued preceptor.

Even after he had given all his energies to the

Bar, and was nearing forty, he more than once played against Cambridge on Fenner's, and made long scores without even practising at a net, as indeed in a lesser match was the case in the last week of his life.

What made Alfred's play the 'champagne of cricket,' as it was aptly termed by W. G. Grace, was his supreme contempt for even the best fast bowling. When he arrived at the wicket, there were no preliminaries ; the fun began at once. His back play was so powerful, and his forward stroke to straight balls so energetic, that his defence had all the vivacity of a counter attack. He had a grand hit to square-leg and deep long-on, and a pitched-up ball flew from his bat like a bullet from a rifle. Withal he gave the field no rest. He was extraordinarily quick between wickets, and drilled his team to keep pace with his short runs by backing up. In consequence, within five minutes of his leaving the pavilion, he had livened up the whole match. Is it to be wondered at that he was accorded by the spectators that ovation on going to the wicket which, as one of his Eton captains once protested, 'should be reserved for the exit, supposing it to be honourable' ? <sup>1</sup>

Alfred's remarkable 'eye' and judgment of pace and distance stood him in good stead when he took

<sup>1</sup> Alfred and I, in 1899, were walking by Buckingham Palace when the driver of a passing hansom cab suddenly stood up on his box and bowled an imaginary ball over the hood as a greeting ; and later still, in 1910 or 1911, I gave my card to a taxi-cab driver, having forgotten my purse. 'Are you any relation to the Honourable Alfred ?' he asked, 'because I've played against him many a time.' The man never came for the double fare I promised him.—E. L.







ALFRED'S BACK-HAND STROKE AT TENNIS

up tennis. He played racquets in his first years at Cambridge, and won the double match against Oxford with E. O. P. Bouverie as his partner, the first Cambridge victory for some years. He also won the double the following year, but was beaten in the singles by his old friend and rival, A. J. Webbe, in a hard match, and after this match he abandoned the game for tennis. Alfred was a fine racquet player, but like most brilliant players sometimes apt to put easy balls below the line, and Webbe largely owed his victory to his own steady play and to Alfred missing some easy strokes.

Nobody who ever lived can have risen to the top in any game quite so fast as Alfred did in tennis. After he had played a month he was the best undergraduate player at Cambridge. He did not begin the game seriously till the October term of 1878, but in 1880 he was second amateur of the day, and amateur champion in 1882. In tennis, as in other games, he always seemed to be on the attack—even when he stopped a hard one it was often in the nature of a repartee. Alfred was always playing to finish off the rest by a brilliant stroke, and like his play at racquets he used occasionally to put easy balls into the net. When pitted against an opponent not so good as he was, he was not at his best, but when challenging the leading professionals, he was quite different. He played several matches against Petitt, once leading him at evens, but afterwards Petitt had to give him half fifteen, and won after very close matches. In comparing him with the professionals as well as with

J. M. Heathcote, the famous amateur champion, it must be remembered that he never could devote anything like the time to the game that they did, but considering that in his prime he was hard at work at the Bar, and his tennis only intermittent, he may be said when at the top of his form never to have been excelled as an amateur.

One particular feature of his play at all games [writes Lord Darnley, in an article in the *Cricketer's Almanack*] was a very remarkable generosity to an opponent whom he was beating. So characteristic was this of our friend, that he was not always so reliable in a match in which he had rather the best of the odds. As many game-players know, however much start a player may have of his opponent, to slacken the game so as to let up the adversary is always dangerous, and the player who does it will very likely fail to find his best game when he wishes to put on full steam again. In his third year at Cambridge, A. L. finally gave up match play at racquets, and soon reached the position of head amateur at tennis, after a historic series of matches with that wonderful veteran, Mr. J. M. Heathcote. Those who were fortunate enough to see these encounters were able to see an interesting study in contrasts of physique, style, and method. The almost emaciated, but tirelessly active physique of the older player against the muscular strength and vigour of the younger; the careful painstaking accuracy and judgment against the more brilliant and dashing style; the shrewd and masterly adaptation of natural resources against the athletic grace and classic method.

It was characteristic of Alfred that, in 1881, when he challenged Mr. Heathcote for the Championship, he allowed the older man to take an hour and a half's rest in the middle of the game, a piece of consideration which cost him the victory.

An account of his play, in the *Times* of 5th July, mentions that he

Founded at old Prince's in Hans Place that beautiful stroke and style which all tennis players who had the delight of seeing it must revere. . . . He was a very great player in all departments of the game—in stroke, in service, return, and volleying, but it is as a stylist that he will never be forgotten. His games with Charles Saunders at Prince's and Lord's in the late 80's and 90's have become classical examples of correct and beautiful tennis. In one match between the two at Lord's it is reported that the longest chase laid down was worse than two—an astonishing achievement. And no one ever enjoyed the game more than he. He was justly celebrated in J. K. S.'s famous poem on tennis in the line

When Alfred's ringing cheer proclaims success.

Alfred held the Tennis Amateur Championship without a break until 1896, when he was beaten by Sir Edward Grey. He had been unable owing to the stress of his work to keep up practice of the game, or without doubt he would have retained the Championship for a few years longer.

## CHAPTER V

### LONDON

1879-1883

. . . he makes visits to country houses . . . converses with established gentlemen, with honourable women not a few ; is gay and welcome with the young of his own age ; knows also religious, witty, and other distinguished ladies and is admirably known of them.—Carlyle's *Life of Sterling*.

EDWARD, writing of Alfred's first years in London, in the private Memoir, begins with an analysis of his character at this time :

To any one who believes that there is no likelihood of any really crucial temptations to wrong-doing or pride being successfully withstood for long, except from strong religious conviction, it will be clear that we have reached a point in Alfred's story critical beyond all others. He was on the threshold of a period when he was to be subjected to a mass of temptations arising from the brilliancy of the success which so far attended him, and was on the whole to increase in lustre and fascination as the years rolled on. In his profession, the Bar, instead of having to wait for years before work came to him, his name and the glamour of his personality brought him into prominence before he had time to acquire sound legal erudition, and he found himself able to achieve all the success he wanted, to win an ample income, and to be engaged in the most interesting and important cases, at a time when many men of greater legal power were gloomily waiting for briefs which never came ; men, too, of far greater academical achievement. In the middle of all this, if he found that adulation palled on him, that the glitter of society became monotonous, or professional advancement

a burden, he had only to resume his place in the world of athletics, and win more fame than ever; by out-topping younger rivals without trouble or practice or fuss of any kind. This was the aspect life wore on its surface, even during his Cambridge time: the special trials that were to come were to be more searching still: but who can even faintly picture to himself such a position without seeing its extraordinary danger, or without realising that every such life is a drama of the most thrilling interest, and that the crisis of this one is close at hand?

Broadly speaking, it might be said that Alfred's attitude towards the allurements of the world was determined, partly by the singular sanity of his mind, but mainly by certain fundamental religious convictions which were implanted in childhood. In the case of one so remarkably reserved, it is not at all obvious that this was what happened. But just as at Eton if evil crossed his path he pushed it away from him, feeling so little interest in it, that he thought it was not his business to denounce it, so when exposed to the seductions of London society . . . he did not allow them to enter his mind at all deeply, or upset his view as to the proportion of things. He gave the appearance of resisting all these dangers without difficulty, and doubtless if they had come upon him in anything like the ordinary volume, it would have been an easy victory. But this cannot have been so, for the truly noteworthy immunity from ordinary weakness and vanity, which characterised him from his Cambridge days onward, could not have been attained without a good deal of what the Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith, in the House of Commons rightly remarked in him, the element of self-discipline, however it may have been concealed from ordinary observation.

After the somewhat discouraging finish to his Cambridge life, Alfred went for a few weeks to Paris with Bernard Holland, and stayed in a *pension* in the Rue Boétie. Here he tried to perfect himself in French, and often described the compliments he



received on his accent. Friends would comment that it must have changed ; but as a matter of fact his power of mimicry helped him greatly, and it was rather a familiarity with the idioms of the language which was lacking. He went constantly to the theatre, especially to the Français, and revelled in the great Victor Hugo dramas.

130 RUE MORNAY,  
PARIS, 9th March 1879.

MY DEAR MARY,—To think that I know no more about you than that you accompanied the great man to London (vide *Daily News*). I saw, however, that the Largo of Handel was done at the Crystal Palace the day after your arrival, and rather expected that you had something to do with that. You will have known before now that I have left St. Germain, which was very different from what Edward had led me to hope. I think he made a mistake in recommending me to go there in the winter, as no one was there, and the doctor who was the great attraction to him has set up a ménage of his own. It is, however, an experience to have seen a little of unmixed French life, and to have been present at little parties given by the good bourgeois and to have shared in their life for a time. For, of course, this is different, there being besides Bernard Holland one or two Americans in the house. It feels very idle this learning the language, but I believe honestly that it is good and that I shall never regret it. I can already read with a great deal more facility than I did, and by the time I leave I think I shall be able to read as quickly in French as in English. I hear also, for I should think four hours a day, French talked on all sorts of subjects and in excellent style. For myself I do not talk much, these people fairly talk one down ; even in English I should find it difficult to stem the torrent, in my faltering French it is impossible.

I have never felt such a real thrill in any theatre in my

life as at *Hernani* the other night : perhaps when Joachim is playing the Beethoven Concerto some such sensation is produced as when Sarah Bernhardt is acting the best passages of Victor Hugo ; in both there is the same difficulty in analysing which is the most amazing, the genius of the composer, or the genius of the artist. My word ! my word ! you must see that when the Français come to England in June. Will you send me, or get for me, some letters of introduction ; ask Sybella if she knows any one here interesting—Frenchmen I mean. I should be very grateful if you would do this, as in a short time I hope to go out a little.

It was probably owing to some introduction from his stepmother that Alfred gained an entrance to Madame Mohl's salon. He used to describe these evenings when the old French lady, confined to her chair, sat directing and controlling the brilliant and witty talk.

He played tennis in the Paris court, coming off triumphant against the French players of the time. But he missed open-air exercise, and despite his pleasure in the companionship of his friend Bernard Holland, the life was not really to his taste. One can imagine his return, with a sigh of relief, to England, where he indulged in an orgy of cricket, even through the hopeless weather of that year.

In a letter to Mary Gladstone from Rushock Rectory, dated the 29th of September 1879, he describes an experience :

Yesterday I did a most extraordinary thing. Little Mr. Moore, with whom I am staying, being very seedy, asked me yesterday (Sunday) at 3 o'clock to preach a sermon for him in his little church at 6.30. Down I sat, wrote for three

hours, mounted the pulpit, and delivered it like a man ; the little man was delighted with it, and paid me many compliments. It is a thing I have often longed to do but of course never expected, and it certainly was a wonderful and rather beautiful experience. I went with him into Droitwich and taught in his night schools a lot of jolly big roughs, who interested and attracted me immensely.

Early in 1879 Mr. Gladstone was invited to contest the metropolitan county of Scotland, which he consented to do after some hesitation. 1878 had been called ' a tumultuous year ' and had seen the San Stefano Treaty, which ended the Russo-Turkish conflict, and produced in England a fever of war. The fleet was ordered to the Dardanelles in January, and in March the reserves were called out. Mr. Gladstone was opposed to this policy, and spoke and voted against it. In June and July the famous Berlin Congress met, and the treaty which sprang from it was denounced by Mr. Gladstone. The arrangement between Great Britain and Turkey was especially criticised, not indeed in all its provisions, but on a broad line of attack against British Ministers, who he declared had taken up the cause of servitude. For the moment no speech could shake Lord Beaconsfield's position, and it was not till the end of the year that a change in the temper of the country was discernible.

In November Mr. Gladstone undertook the Midlothian campaign. His wife and daughter were to go with him, and it occurred to Mary that there was a chance for her young cousin to gain valuable experience, and come under the influence of the great

man. She suggested, therefore, that Alfred should join the party at Dalmeny, Lord Rosebery having given her permission to invite whom she chose.

Alfred, however, felt that he ought to remain in London and read for the Bar, so he writes for advice from the Warden through Lavinia :

LATIMER,  
CHESHAM, 19th October 1880.

MY DEAR LAVINIA,—I have not been the best of correspondents lately, but you shall not have reason to complain that I do not make up when I break silence. I came here on my way to join old Brett who lies at Watford, having spent notwithstanding Real Property one of the most reposeful and pleasant five weeks that I ever remember at Hagley and Perrystone.<sup>1</sup> I have managed a good deal of work, and am pleased to find that I am much more cheerful and better tempered when remaining in one place working than I was in the barren chase of amusement with which I occupied myself too long in the summer. I wish things would divide themselves better in life, and that one could get amusement for half days instead of whole. If that were so I should never wish for holydays.

Hagley was of course delightful, and the economy there tho' strict did not make us any the less happy I think. It is fine to see how the expenses which affect others are not grudged, *e.g.* school feast, prizes, etc., when even personal discomfort is sometimes endured to save, when only they themselves are concerned.

If at the Chantry<sup>2</sup> I had not done more than get rather intimate with that fine creature Kathleen, I should have been well rewarded. Wonderful is the satisfaction after, it is true, strenuous digging, to find such bright gold. After being there about ten days I thought of giving up the vain attempt to get further than a pleasant acquaintanceship with her, still I did not, but persevered, and the last two or three walks I had with her, especially the last, were truly

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Clive's country house.

<sup>2</sup> Sybella Lady Lyttelton's house.

delightful, and left with me an abiding impression of her rare charm, and of the good luck of the 'Nymph.'<sup>1</sup> A thorough Clive, and a thorough woman in her cheerful unselfish devotion to other people, she is yet a man almost, in her steady gaze at the things which make a 'great outside' to ordinary life, and in her large and *pensive* views thereon. It is very good to feel brotherly towards a new sister that is to be, quite independently of any obligation to be so.

I am sorely puzzled about Midlothian. M. G. says, and I think justly, that if I miss the chance I may regret it all my life; on the other hand continued application is not my strong point and I wish it to be so; if it was a jolly shooting party I really would refuse it without a qualm, but it is not, and apart from Uncle William, I should see things and meet people who may be of great service to me in after life.

Pray let me hear what you and the *Warden* think on this head.

Give my best love to the old gent<sup>2</sup> and tell him from me, if he has not heard it, that the numbers of Eton have not gone down in the slightest, which when I heard I rejoiced exceedingly.

What the Warden said is not recorded, but fortune favoured Alfred's desire, and some rearrangement of work made the expedition possible for him.

Perhaps no statesman before or since has had such an ovation as Mr. Gladstone, aged seventy, received during the whole of the week of the Midlothian campaign. The stations where the train stopped were crowded, and he spoke at Carlisle, at Hawick, at Galashiels, and reached Edinburgh at night to find the streets filled by a huge mass of cheering people.

<sup>1</sup> A nickname for Arthur Lyttelton, to whom Kathleen Clive was then engaged.

<sup>2</sup> Edward Lyttelton.



Alfred kept a diary of the week when day after day Mr. Gladstone delivered the wonderful series of speeches which so roused the country, that the end of the Beaconsfield Government became only a question of exact date.

The following extracts are given because they contain many intimate details about Mr. Gladstone, and show with what intense interest Alfred watched and analysed the whole situation :

On my arrival at breakfast time on Tuesday November 25th, I found besides our hosts, the three Gladstones, Lacaita, and Boehm the sculptor. I thought W. E. G. looked five years younger than when I had last seen him in the London season, a fact he attributed entirely to his stay abroad. The contrast also between his manner here, two or three hours before making a great speech, and his manner the last time I heard him in the House of Commons, was extraordinary. On the latter occasion I had never seen any one so perturbed and 'distract,' he seemed to be made perfectly miserable by nervous excitement. Here he was absolutely cheerful and composed : though he sat upstairs all the morning thinking out his speech, both at breakfast and luncheon no trace of anxiety or nervousness was present, and to the moment of leaving he talked Greek art with Boehm in the most animated way. I followed, solitary in a brougham, the carriage and four in which W. E. G. was taken into Edinburgh ; of course the enthusiasm was great, no one scarcely, all along the seven miles road from here to Edinburgh, refrained from taking off his hat, and many smartish carriages lined the road near the town.

Nothing could exceed the greatness of the *manner* in the first speech ; to me this was the most striking feature of it, as scarcely anything said in it was new, if the defence of the Liberal party in the matter of factiousness is excepted. Though sitting behind on the platform, I could see as much, or almost as much, of his face as those sitting in front, so



constantly did he turn round and as it were range on all sides of him. The only rhetorical device which was unpleasing to me was the method he employed to point his more bitter sneers; this is done in a drawling voice not natural to him, and though effective is disagreeable.

In the evening the only difficulty was to attend enough, so much did he talk and on such interesting topics. He called O'Connell the greatest of all *demagogues*, somewhat indignantly repudiating Rosebery's suggestion that Bright was greater, denying him the title of demagogue which he thought could not be applied to one who had always been governed in public life by conscience. 'Bright and Cobden consented to become the most odious men in England for conscience' sake in the Crimean war times.' Rosebery remarked that Bright had been a complete oratorical failure, according to his grandfather's account, when he first 'stood' at Durham, but Gladstone declared that the first time he had ever met him—it was in a deputation—he had been at once struck by the manner and force of the man. Adam<sup>1</sup> and W. E. G. recalled a conversation at W. E. G.'s house in which Bright and Bishop Wilberforce had taken part, when Bright told him of his misery, on delivering a speech he had learned by heart, and his vow never to do it again.

There was high praise of Wilberforce as a most spontaneous and absolutely extempore speaker. Of Dizzy W. E. G. spoke as he always does, except in great privacy, with a sort of amused and yet puzzled tone: it would be wrong to say that there is not some tinge of admiration in the half laughing, half scornful manner he adopts on this strange theme.

Speaking of Dizzy's famous first speech, he declared it wonderful that a man should have retained so completely in later life his early style. 'O'Connell, with the cap of liberty in one hand and the keys of St. Peter in the other, might perfectly have been said by Dizzy now.' 'He has completely conquered the men who roared with laughter at him, and he has never changed his *weapons*. Truly the

<sup>1</sup> Liberal Whip.

most striking phenomenon not only of English Political history, but of that of the world.'

The next day the scene of action was Dalkeith. We took Boehm into the hall, and he commented upon Gladstone's action resembling, as he said it did, the furling and unfurling of an eagle's wing. The shrewdness of the Scotch audiences is no surprise to me or to any one, but their demonstrativeness every one says is most unusual and remarkable.

The meeting on the following day was, I think, almost the most interesting of the three. I watched the audience and they were literally swayed by the speech. I could see the heads of them nodding assent when he affirmed, and indignantly shaking when he derided, ecstatic laughter burst out when he sneered, and if one looked round, the gleam of eyes wet with emotion and excitement was most curious to behold. In I think the very last sentence of the speech, to my great alarm, he paused for two or three seconds with his lips working, and I thought that he was going to lose the sentence for a moment, but after a dreadful fluttering pause he finished without any appearance of embarrassment. I enjoyed the speech the most of the three I have yet heard, and he was I think greatly pleased with it, his eyes twinkling just like a benignant eagle, when he was lying down after in the train, with his chin and mouth tucked right in to a shawl. It is curious to observe, as Boehm said, how his chin expands when he is speaking; it is like a plum in shape then, while ordinarily it resembles a prune.

On the Monday morning I went away, having witnessed the most wonderful exhibition of physical and mental power ever displayed by a man of seventy. His speeches will furnish abundant food for criticism, but no one who heard them will ever admit that they were not with all their strength, moderate; a fact the more remarkable when it is remembered that the spirit of these Scotch audiences when they are thus roused would have inflamed almost any one into immoderateness: one felt the passion in the air. Every great orator must more strongly than other men feel sympathy with his hearers, and get inspira-

tion from them. I think it the more remarkable then that the speeches should have been well weighed, sober, rarely bitter, and yet full of deep strong conviction.

Alfred was called to the Bar in June 1881. He made his way very quickly. No doubt his great reputation as a cricket and tennis player, England being what it is, gave him a good start. A solicitor choosing from among a lot of young barristers all unknown to him, would be inclined to give Alfred Lyttelton a trial. Had he not been able to justify the choice, this start would have been illusory, but he very soon showed great mastery of detail and power of persuasion.

The next few years were a delightful period of his life. Sybella made his home existence all that was happy and comfortable; he had perfect freedom; he was enjoying the exhilaration of gathering friends from among the most interesting and attractive people of his day, and he was at the same time making a surprisingly good start in his career.

Edward writes of him :

Sybella and he were on the happiest terms; he used to come in and talk with her after his work and before dinner. She was a woman with boundless hospitable instincts, her sympathy went out to every one without discrimination, and it was quite enough for her to see a ' moth or a maukin '—to quote Glynnese <sup>1</sup>—for her to invite them to Bryanston Square. Alfred used to protest, but never with much success.

<sup>1</sup> *Glynnese Glossary*. . . Maukin, which is in English an abbreviation of the word manniken, . . . means in Glynnese always a living person : and one discovered somewhere where his business is questionable, an unexpected apparition : . . . a sick person much exposed to the unexpected visits of friends and of strangers was pitied as being liable to a succession of maukins coming into his room.

He writes to Sybella when she was away visiting her mother, gently chaffing her about both her dinner parties, and her amusing disregard of money difficulties. She always refused to be hampered by these, and somehow neither she nor any one else was ever the worse.

9 BRYANSTON SQUARE.

MY DEAR SYBELLA,—Place—the study—time—11.30, generally a snug and genial hour for a talk with you, and so why not now when the words are heard only twelve hours or so after they are written. I have just been dining with the Percy Wyndhams—most charming evening, took in pretty little Miss Wyndham,<sup>1</sup> there were also Tallee and Va,<sup>2</sup> Lady Alice Gaisford, the Brodricks, Dicky Doyle, and one or two young men with whom, or rather from whom, competition was not overwhelming; a party quite up to Bryanston Square form, though perhaps arranged by Mrs. Percy with more freedom than is generally permitted to you by your truculent charge. Ah me, how we have laughed over those meals, so harmonious in their result but so discordant in formation; I can picture your dear face now with an expression of mingled amusement, apology, and defiance, when you have finally and triumphantly landed some Billymore into the midst of our choicest party. Everything is beautifully done for me, my dear soul; and the paper and drawers are, alas, without a trace of the cheeriest and gentlest bankrupt in the world, positively not an unpaid bill or an unfinished letter on the premises. Nothing but a memory (very deep down though) in me.—Your ever affectionate

ALFRED LYTTTELTON.

This nonsense is only for you and your mother.

Every now and then there can be detected in Alfred's letters to Mary Gladstone a wonder how

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Lady Elcho.

<sup>2</sup> Lady Sarah Spencer and Lady Sandhurst, both cousins.

long it would be before he was swept off his feet by love; but his feet were in reality very firmly planted, and on more than one occasion he turned uneasy when there seemed to be danger ahead, feeling instinctively that the time was not yet. Meanwhile he was invited everywhere, and all manner of people, old and young, fell under his charm. It seems that some members of his family were afraid that the great popularity he enjoyed might turn his head; it was certainly somewhat of a test. Mary had evidently twitted him about his many engagements, and he wrote in a letter of March 1880:

9 BRYANSTON SQUARE, W.,  
*March 1880.*

Just returned from Wellington, when I heard to my great wrath that you weren't coming to London to-day as I had thought. However, you are right to stay at pretty Hawarden while you can, though this is a brave time in London. Symphony concert next Tuesday, 'Eroica,' Hallé's band splendid; Passion Music coming on at St. Paul's, to which we must go together. Mrs. Flower wants greatly to come with us, I told her it was a regular thing for us to do; oh, what lots to tell you about, it is no good beginning in a letter. But I am going to wig you about your reasons for not thinking about me ever, viz., that I was the sought after young man who went to plays with Mary<sup>1</sup> and had tea with Margaret,<sup>2</sup> etc. Upon my life, if you draw mortgage deeds all day, I'm darned if you're not entitled to go to plays, and more too, with Mary and drink pails of tea with M. Talbot, without having old friends writing to say that they consider such a being as having too jolly a time of it to be worth any attention. When everything else, even daylight, is abandoned, something is necessary to prevent extinction. However, it is the way undeniably of our family, and I for one never accept a festive invitation without the consciousness that the

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Lady Minto.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Reginald Talbot.



family eye is bent upon the butterfly of the race, and that the family lips are pronouncing the gloomiest presages of future failure.

In 1881 Alfred undertook to deliver a series of lectures on law at the Working Men's College, which claimed a great deal of anxious preparation. He writes to Bernard Holland, then in Florence, about this and other things :

HAWARDEN CASTLE,  
CHESTER, *22nd September 1881.*

MY DEAR B. H.,—I would have written to you before in answer to the, to me, specially delightful letter which you sent me from Guernsey; for I never thought that you liked me half as much as I liked you, but you said one or two things in that letter which made me think that you perhaps did, and so brought to me much and great contentment. If I can get any richer I vow that you shall not go abroad next September alone; the account you send seems too delicious for words, and you have deserved it I think, if you endured an August anything like I did, no sunshine, no dry days—deep cursing sat on my lips, while rheumatics hovered about my bones. I have been here sitting at the feet of the great man for a fortnight, making what preparation I can for the delivery of these lectures. I have done myself some good in the process, but whether the workmen, poor souls, will get hold of anything solid, I do not know, but I am filled with much fear on their behalf. The various classifications of laws are very interesting, and attempting to make an elementary one is good work. We indirectly abused Gladstone the other day for not telling the working classes, which we contended were dominant, more home truths. His defence was that the people, though they were all powerful when stirred, are during long periods sluggish and uninterested; during these times the aristocratic and propertied classes get all government into their hands. I don't think this was quite adequate; it amounts to an assertion that (roughly) the aristocracy are still so strong that stirring



up the people against them is justifiable, nay necessary ; the fact being that in the present state of agriculture the English aristocrats are having a devilish bad time of it, and yet have held themselves well thereunder, dealing generously with tenants. Do you see—after seisin, heir-at-law, entail and all that damned nonsense has been cleared away with perhaps the law of distraint—any legitimate room for land reform in England? It seems to me that for us to talk about fair rent by legislation is melancholy indeed ; the tenant is now the strong contracting party, he may make almost any demand he pleases ; for the law to put this man . . . into leading-strings like a child or an Irishman—*cela étonne*. After telling every one that Ireland is no precedent and no argument for us here, I shall hardly know how to meet my enemies in the gate if our party applies the reasoning, used last session, to an advanced civilisation.

Gerald<sup>1</sup> doesn't return till October 1. Don't you leave me high and dry in London and go off and live in Italy. I sometimes have a horrible fear that you will. I am bound to say that I love hearing of you living a student life, which is immensely good for you. I wish to goodness something would arise in London which could give you the opportunity of resuming it, and yet contain in it a sufficient practicality to keep that side of you employed. I don't believe in Gerald's career for any one scarcely, except Germans : with us it seems rarely to answer. I can't but believe that you would do well perhaps to put your old back for one or two years very vigorously into law. I think most of the best of our living men of letters have done so without damage to style, and with very great benefit to mental strength and method. I shall watch the movement in France which is about to extirpate religion with profound interest. I will bet £100 that in twenty years there will be a reaction in favour of some religious form or other.

I am going to Cambridge in October for a week or so—the partridge has received little harm at my hands this September.—Your loving

A. L.

<sup>1</sup> Gerald Balfour, then in Italy.

By the autumn of 1881 the political condition of Ireland was becoming increasingly serious. Mr. Gladstone's Government had won through its difficulties over the Bradlaugh case, but had now to face a dangerous state of affairs at home. 'During more than thirty-seven years since I first entered a Cabinet,' Mr. Gladstone told the Speaker (25th of November 1881), 'I have hardly known so difficult a question of administration as that of the immediate duty of the Government in the present state of Ireland.'

Agrarian outrages were frequent, in spite of the fact that in some parts of Ireland, notably Galway, the police were in a proportion of one to every forty-seven of the population. Military protection was very extensive, yet landlords great and small went in fear of their lives. It seemed inevitable that if law and order were to be respected, strong measures must be taken. Early in 1881 Mr. Forster brought in his Act for the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus, and the Irish developed their formidable Parliamentary weapon of obstruction, which has done so much to injure government by deliberative assemblies. On the 31st of January the Bill was finally passed, after an all-night sitting, by the Speaker putting the question. Looking back, it can be seen that the particular form this Act took was not altogether wise: it gave too great a power to the Viceroy, and its drastic though temporary strength only served to exacerbate the temper of the Nationalists in Ireland. Mr. Gladstone brought in his Land Bill embodying the recommendations of a Lords' Commission, which reported in favour of the three

F's—Fair Rents, Fixity of Tenure, Free Sale—and on these lines the Bill was framed and passed. But neither of these Acts solved the problem, and in September it was obvious that the difficulties and dangers of the situation were only likely to increase. Mr. Parnell was determined to wreck the operations of the Land Act; people clamoured that as an inciter of lawlessness and rebellion, Parnell should be put in prison; but Mr. Gladstone still hesitated.

Alfred had spent his autumn holiday mainly in paying shooting visits, and he writes to Sybella of his time with the present Lord Grey, giving also his views on the Irish question :

KING'S ARMS HOTEL,  
BERWICK-ON-TWEED, 8th October 1881.

MY DEAR SYBELLA,—I have not yet got to Howick, but go there on Saturday till Thursday : we have been shooting partridges with considerable success here for the inside of a week, sport good, and Albert perfectly delightful; on the whole about the most lovable man I know as a private individual, while as a public man he will, I feel sure, do a great deal, working probably I think on some such lines, roughly speaking, as my father did, educational and philanthropic rather than in the stereotyped route of party politics, which he has a mind too like his Uncle's thoroughly to enjoy. I did a goodish bit of reading at Hagley, and am quite prepared to get into harness again soon, after the lapse of this noble holiday, *the* trump card of the Bar as an enjoyable profession.

Well, it does seem to me that if the state of affairs in Ireland at all resembles the accounts which we have in the papers, the Government will be acting in a deplorable manner if they do not quickly do something of a most drastic character. My acquaintance with the law of sedition is confined to about two hundred years back, so I don't speak with much authority thereon, but I believe that these agitators do not

place themselves within its operation, and that legislation of an extraordinary character must be resorted to, to bring them to justice. And surely the justification, if ever there is one for extraordinary laws, exists now. The accounts given by the unfortunate landlords in their deputation are thrilling beyond words, while behind them rises that most awful commentary and illustration—the murder of Lord Mountmorres, and above all the almost incredibly horrible circumstances following it, the refusal to receive the corpse and the brutal indecency of hatred at the funeral.<sup>1</sup> Home Rule or Martial Law is a dreadful alternative for Liberal statesmen, but if we are determined (as all are) to withhold the one, the other or something very like it must be the solution of the problem.

In October 1881 Mr. Gladstone had been to Leeds, as a token of gratitude for the city having elected him the year before, and there gravely warned the Irish leader.

He desires [said the Prime Minister] to arrest the operation of the Land Act : to stand as Moses stood, between the living and the dead, to stand there not as Moses stood, to arrest, but to spread the plague—if it shall appear that there is still to be fought a final conflict in Ireland between law on one side and sheer lawlessness upon the other, if the law purged from defect and from any taint of injustice is still to be repelled and refused, and the first conditions of political society to remain unfulfilled, then I say, gentlemen, without hesitation, the resources of civilization against its enemies are not yet exhausted.

Alfred writes about this Leeds visit to his cousin :

W. E. G.'s two early speeches at Leeds perfectly glorious, making my eyes very moist ; the references to retirement are noticed and noticeable, but not a word. It is

<sup>1</sup> Lord Mountmorres was murdered by Land Leaguers.

awful in Ireland—absolutely necessary, as I think, but fearfully difficult to see the end. How astounding to hear the shouts of these vile writers about the wickedness of postponing the arrests till now. Why even now, at the eleventh hour, Parnell gains support, and what would he not have received had the case been not palpably proven. If he has Ireland at his back now, he would have had six months ago a third of England too. I would give anything to be able to see on some months ahead. At first it was impossible not to feel a fierce exultation, and I see no ignominy in it, as the *Pall Mall* does ; it is melancholy, not disgraceful. This is the last I shall write at such length till my next holiday. I shall be very hard worked in London till Xmas, but it has been nice talking with you thus, and picturing you to myself. I have sent the supplementary budget to Lavinia, and so now bless you.—Your loving  
A. L.

At last the Government resolved to arrest Mr. Parnell, and in October 1881 put him in prison under the Coercion Act for defying the Land Act and inciting the people to do so. The Irish leader was placed in Kilmainham Jail, where he remained six months. But matters did not mend.

From the beginning of the session of 1882 the Government was faced with immense difficulties. The Coercion Act (Ireland) was to expire in September, and the Cabinet had to decide before the end of the session whether (1) to renew it as it stood, (2) to drop it altogether, or (3) to replace it with some other measure. Irish obstruction in the House had become so powerful an engine that before attempting to pass any contentious measure, it was necessary to pass the ' Procedure ' Bill (which was to introduce Closure). Mr. Gladstone had all



along viewed Coercion, and especially the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, with great reluctance, but had consented to it in deference to Mr. Forster's strong opinion. An alternative measure was however decided upon, mainly drawn up by Mr. Forster. This measure, afterwards known as the Prevention of Crimes Act, superseded the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act and made provision for the examination in private of witnesses in criminal cases. The Bill was ready for drafting by the end of April ; the only question unsettled being whether it should take precedence of the Arrears Bill, or be introduced *pari passu* with it.

Before the end of April Lord Cowper resigned, and Lord Spencer was appointed to succeed him as Lord Lieutenant. When Mr. Forster found that Lord Spencer was strongly in favour of releasing the suspects, he resigned. Mr. Gladstone selected Lord Frederick Cavendish for the post of Irish Secretary, and on the night of the 5th of May he went over to Ireland. His wife wrote about this :

In spite of all difficulties and dangers there seemed to be more than a ray of hope for Ireland. With the promise of the Arrears Bill and the release of the suspects, we all hoped the Land Act would work happily, while the Crimes Bill, which was to take the place of the old Coercion Act, bade fair to secure life and property.

Lord Frederick spent most of the next day, the 6th of May, in consultation with Lord Spencer over the new provisions for coping with disorder which had been framed in London. About five Lord Spencer went out for a ride, and an hour later Lord Frederick



started to walk to the Chief Secretary's Lodge. He was overtaken by the Under Secretary, Mr. Burke, who jumped out of his car to walk with him. Lord Frederick himself was quite unknown to the Irish agitators, but Mr. Burke, as belonging to the hated Castle officialdom, had long, with others, been marked for murder. The opportunity on this occasion was not lost; Mr. Burke was brutally attacked; both men were unarmed, but Lord Frederick did his best to fend off the murderers with his umbrella, and was himself fatally stabbed. The news reached London late on the night of the 6th.

Alfred was in Bryanston Square, and was awakened by Lord Frederick's servant with the words, 'Get up, sir, get up; they've knifed his Lordship.' He often spoke of the effect of these words upon his half-wakened consciousness, and he never overcame a certain nervouness about any sudden noise in the early morning. He writes to his stepmother then away, telling her what had happened:

10 DOWNING STREET,  
WHITEHALL, *7th May 1882.*

MY DEAR SYBELLA,—At 2 o'clock this morning, when I was asleep in Bryanston Square, I was woken by Lucy's butler and told with terrible abruptness of the awful news. I went down to Carlton House Terrace very shortly after and found poor Lady Louisa<sup>1</sup> scarcely able to speak. I went up afterwards to Lucy and stayed with her half an hour. She loved to go back to the old memories, and recollected all my particular relations with Freddy, and dwelt on them. Then Mr. Gladstone's words as to the noble death in the

<sup>1</sup> Lady Louisa Egerton, Lord Frederick's sister.

path of a duty nobly undertaken, comforted her greatly, and she lives in the hope that the sacrifice which has been made may contribute much to a reaction of right feeling, and condemnation of the brutal anarchy which has prevailed, and of which this last was the final and most awful expression.

I go to Chatsworth with her to-morrow, Nevy comes too. Lady Louisa asked particularly for both of us, and so I am glad to go as Lucy also wishes it, though I am fearful that I shall be able to do but little for them. I shall be glad to see you again, dear old thing—I have missed you so, in this most terrible time. I had a great shock last night.  
—Your ever affectionate ALFRED LYTTTELTON.

The following letters speak for themselves :

CHATSWORTH,  
CHESTERFIELD, 10th May 1882.

MY DEAR SYBELLA,—I think it would not be at all well for you to come to the funeral—the distance is very great and the crowd will be immense, quite overpowering for you—and there is no reason. Lucy is not on that footing with you that any proof of affection is needed. I read your letter to her, and she said that she loved it and she liked the piece about Papa so much.

I think she would be very glad to hear from you directly. It is almost certain that I return on Friday. You will expect me if I don't write again.—Ever your affectionate  
ALFRED LYTTTELTON.

CHATSWORTH,  
CHESTERFIELD, 8th May 1882.

MY DEAR MARY,—I was going to write to you anyway, and so Nevy wishes me to answer his letter from you. . . .

They have been all most kind to us. Hartington received us both most cordially, taking us into his room, and asking everything about Lucy, with whom he had a very long talk this morning. We went down with Lucy

to see the body, which was brought over by Byng this morning. Nevy and I had gone in before. The face was perfectly calm, and had he died in his bed, completer repose would have been impossible. 'He looked more quiet than when he slept,' she said.

We went for Lucy and she was quite composed coming down, but when we came to the door of the chapel, she trembled. We stopped outside, she came out crying bitterly, and leant her head on Lady Loo's shoulder. It was piteous to see—but she was comforted as we all were by the sight of the peaceful and noble expression. They are all, I think, anxious that your father should not come, the day will be a very long one.—Your very aff: A. L.

Alfred at once decided to leave Bryanston Square, live with his sister, and try to help her in her sorrow and loneliness. His own life, of course, was resumed, and took its normal course; Lucy herself would have asked nothing else.

His work at the Bar was growing in volume; earlier in the year he had written to Mary about his first brief in a case involving life and death for his client:

I am on circuit now and not over happy, and so letters are a great break. I defended a woman for manslaughter at Worcester at less than half an hour's notice. When the Judge first asked me I said Yes directly, but I literally trembled with nervousness all over, while I was reading the outline of the case. But directly I began to cross-examine, and speak in court, the strong sense of some one depending on me, removed all personal nervousness and fearfulness, and I don't think any one guessed I was nervous, nor indeed was I, when once started. She was acquitted all right, which is satisfactory—very—for the first time.

In the autumn he played a good deal of cricket, and he writes to Bernard Holland :

OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE CLUB,  
PALL MALL, S.W., *30th August 1882.*

MY DEAR B. H.,—I wonder if this letter will ever reach you. I have my doubts, still I cast it on the waters in some hope that it may. It was right good of you to send the congratulations for Portsmouth,<sup>1</sup> the abiding pleasure of which does much to compensate for even the disasters of the nation in cricket subsequently. There was something very inspiring in the look of the ground, with blue-jackets and redcoats dotted amid the thousands of civilians, with trains running past the deep fields filled with white helmeted regiments on their way to the front,<sup>2</sup> cheering us and we cheering them as they went. And there was the splendid old feeling of comradeship, and all the associations of many battles successfully waged for old Cambridge ; these things made the heart go at a greater pace than ever I thought it would again at a game, on that memorable day. I was saddened, dear old fellow, at the tone of some parts of your letter, and would to heaven that something might be suggested which would give you the feeling of residence and not of voyage in a profession. Alas—for many things—that we did not live long ago when beliefs were hard to be shaken, and when the student and the humane man could always find scope for the best efforts of heart and mind in the parson's profession. Such a variety of intellectual and moral aim can be successfully appropriated in that service!—but it is closed now to thousands who formerly would have entered it, and more fine minds are every year lost in the heavy routine of business, and the clangorous tumults of the Bar. It is all very well for me in this latter, and in many ways I am well

<sup>1</sup> He is alluding to the cricket match, Australians *v.* Cambridge University, won by the latter. On the 28th and 29th of the same month Australia beat a picked eleven playing for England.

<sup>2</sup> Egypt.

suited to the life, nor will it be otherwise than wholesome for you, old friend, for a bit longer, only I can't bear to think of your dwelling in the Courts (emphatically not of the Lord) for ever. I sometimes think of medicine for you, but there is so terribly little leisure, and physical nerve almost beyond what you have is, I should think, required. What is that you said about drifting apart at the end of your letter; you don't mean that surely. I never felt closer moored throughout all our long sail, and the 'breeze' may be ever so 'bounding,' and the 'seas' ever so 'rushing,' and my hawser shall not break. So don't speak of this again, for I don't believe that you really think it,—Ever your affectionate

ALFRED LYTTTELTON.

In October Alfred went to Paris, from which place the following letter was written to Bernard Holland:

HOTEL DU LOUVRE,  
PARIS, 8<sup>th</sup> October 1882.

MY DEAR B. H.,—Your letter was, it is needless to say, a real pleasure to me. Since it arrived my excellent brother Spencer has stood me a journey to this gay city, and at every step I am reminded of my dear old comrade of former times. Yesterday we once more, in company with J. G. Butcher, saw 'Ruy Blas' at the Français. Brohan most engagingly played the part of the Queen, a part which is really written for her, and hardly requires the wonderful powers of Sarah. Febvre's Don Salluste was the new impression for me—he played superbly and looked like the finest Velasquez; Coquelin was as ever—but so alas was Mounet Sully, from whom we were distant only three or four short yards, as the still reverberating drum of my ear painfully reminds me. It always requires a fortnight or so of association with Frenchmen to enable one to carry sympathy into the frantic methods they have of expressing strong emotion: perhaps it is the prosaic recollections of the Inner Temple which make it more than ever hard to

appreciate the intensity of grief which sounds itself on the high G, and must be audible from the Français to Les Halles. Spencer, alas, has hankerings for the opera, for low comedy, 'Judic' and the like, and it is with difficulty that I shall persuade him to go with sufficient frequency to the home of all that is good in the drama. I went to the Rue Boétie yesterday, but only saw Mademoiselle, who received me with all empressement. It was pleasant to find (by the obvious recognition which the domestic gave me when I told my name, though she had not been with us) that we were carried in the memories of our old friends. I shall dine there next Wednesday and shall salute Madame, and I hope master my French so as to get on pretty well. Your letter describes an ideal state of things, and one which I should like enormously; the only difficulty for me is that the Venetian air is slack and extends but little health into the jaded form of the full-blooded man—I believe that the heat expands you like a spring flower. I shall expect from you all sorts of tender and romantic verses written as the sound of music and the moonlit waters inspire you. What would I not give to be with you! Alack, I am forced to be back in England next Saturday. I miss you here most sadly. I don't think ever fellow-voyagers agreed more thoroughly, and then there was such a perfect ease of life that the days went bravely and without jar. Long life to you—I shouldn't come back were I you till November.—Your ancient friend, A. L.

A most confounded crowd are moving up and down this salon—so the letter may or may not be intelligible.

This chapter shall finish with extracts from one or two letters that need no explanation.

9 BRYANSTON SQUARE, W.,  
*Easter 1882.*

DEAREST MARY,—A letter was sketched out in my mind before yours arrived, and I was rather pleased to find that directly a bit of real leisure came to me, when there were



not notes to answer every quarter of an hour, and lectures to prepare, the old feeling was as strong as ever, that I must tell you all about it and whom I liked, and whether it had been fun. Castle Ashby<sup>1</sup> was on the whole a success : it is always enough for me if I make, or make a good start in making, the friendship of some one well worth friendship. And considering the time—for she, alack, only stayed one night, I made a great push with Lady Tavistock. By masterly strategy arranged before, Balfour and I managed to get on each side of her at both afternoon and evening concerts, and the next morning, being fortunately in better form than I almost ever am at that untimely hour, I had a talk of more than an hour before she started. It is quite impossible not to be fascinated by a low soft voice and pretty foreign articulation (nice clear cut consonants) and sad dark eyes looking under eyelashes that lie all along her cheek. And then a way of bending over to you (*se penchant*, you know) when she is interested, puts every faculty on the alert to try and find the right subject. This makes a combination most deeply interesting and attractive. But it wasn't long enough, and I don't know whether I shall be able to pick it up again. I would do anything to serve her. Balfour was charming as ever. A certain doubt came over me whether he is exactly a good man for getting talk up to a good topic ; the fact is that his wit is so extraordinary and fertile that he adorns the dullest subjects, and letting his subtle fancy loose upon them, makes other folk content to remain without striving to approach more fruitful themes. The singing was very good indeed, Charles Wade being the best on the whole.

And again, in February 1883 :

THE CLOISTERS,  
GLOUCESTER, 18th February 1883.

I was in Chester the other day : met Sibell Grosvenor<sup>2</sup> ; she asked me over to luncheon, within an ace of being

<sup>1</sup> Lord Northampton's place.

<sup>2</sup> Lady Grosvenor.

*tête-à-tête* :—absolutely no other word but darling for Sibell. We talked and played till four, and then drove into Chester and heard a beautiful Spohr anthem, and after service walked about the Cathedral in dim light. A bit of pure happiness amid the ordinary moments of this rough life. She has, as you said, wonderfully coaxing ways. I don't know where I should be in—well—two days, considering the havoc wrought by three hours. But I shall come from London next time she goes to Hawarden.

Now good-bye, my precious, twenty-six is a most serious age, and my profession is claspng me round the neck like a vice. I live in deadly fear of becoming an absolute stick, with no spring or thought beyond law. You mustn't give me up.—Ever your loving  
A. L.

To George Curzon :

ASTON CLINTON,  
TRING, 12th March 1882.

MY DEAR GEORGE,—I was right pleased to see once more a handwriting which though easily recognised, still is not, alas, so familiar as I could desire. I recognise indeed in your occupation abundant excuse, and I think you would also admit that eleven to six every day at ordinary work, with a weekly legal lecture of an hour's length to prepare and deliver, is not conducive to an overflowing correspondence.

I see you are keeping a brave heart, my dear boy, notwithstanding the weariness of the long stiff task—it would do you good to hear Gladstone speak of the great service which the mere grind of the Oxford exams: have yielded him. Every serious call which exceptional labour has made on him has reminded him of the Oxford schools, and made him rejoice at the sheer grit which they produced. His first holyday was taken to hear the debates in the Lords on the Reform Bill, in 1831, and I should not wonder if another student isn't stretching eagerly out over the world of politics into the midst of which he will soon plunge. What a future there is before a Conservative, young, patient, and gifted. Never in my view have that party had such a

position for the use of argument, declamation, irony. And yet it is left to a clever youngster, who didn't begin to apply his mind to anything before he was twenty-six, in all hard hitting battles, to lead the party.<sup>1</sup> It makes me long to be a Tory : and since you are fortunate enough to genuinely hold those opinions, now is your time. . . . I am getting absurdly keen, however, about the Bar, and declare that even if a good chance elsewhere turned up I should be most reluctant to leave it for some years. It is delightful to feel how every day adds to one's growth in mental strength, for that, I think, is the thing which is really imparted more than anything else by legal work ; not breadth or imagination or great range, but just sheer mental robustness.

And to the same a little later :

21 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE,  
*1st April 1883.*

A great step has come to me. The Attorney-General, Sir Henry James, has lost one of the men who help in his chambers at the official work—and he has offered me to fill his place. A very great compliment and a very great opportunity for me in many ways.

I only wish that I had three or four years' more experience as the work will be desperate hard, and will often require doing with great rapidity.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Randolph Churchill.





LAURA

*From a Photograph by  
H. Walter Barnett*

## CHAPTER VI

### LAURA

1884-1886

Over your creations of Beauty there is the mist of tears.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

ALFRED speaks once or twice in letters of his 'leathery heart,' meaning by this phrase to explain—perhaps excuse—the fact that he had reached the age of twenty-five without being in love. He certainly had many delightful relationships with girls and women—his sisters, one or two cousins, and various other friends. But as he himself expressed it to one of them, 'when I find things getting dangerous I just sheer off.'

He did not want to marry before his work at the Bar justified such a venture, and he was always controlled and disciplined. But this is only a partial explanation. He was in reality guarded by a very high ideal of what companionship in marriage might mean. It was not enough for him to be fascinated, his aspirations had to be gratified as well as his emotions. When he was not quite sure he 'sheered off.'

Sometime in the summer of 1884, at a dinner party given by Mrs. Herbert Jekyll, he sat next to a little pale girl with fair golden hair. She had large grey-blue eyes set far apart, with a peculiar upward turn of the underlid, which somehow gave



to her whole face an indescribable pathos and charm. No one could have said she was pretty if straightly questioned, yet it was impossible not to think of her as lovely. She was very small, with slender arms, and there was always a certain sweet warmth and daintiness about her. Sometimes she was swept into a gay, even noisy flow of spirits and fun, heightened by wit, yet the sense of tears in mortal things was never far from her, and her eyes would betray the musing of a spirit ardent, fiery, passionate, always aflame with love, not only of life and of human beings, but of God. She was made of 'spirit, fire, and dew.'

Her name was Laura—Laura Tennant, the daughter of a rich man, afterwards Sir Charles Tennant. She had three married sisters older than herself and one younger—Margot—now Mrs. Asquith. They were all clever and full of talent, but the two youngest could not only draw, and play, and write, but they could talk brilliantly. This is Margot's description of her sister: 'The most astonishing vitality and eagerness, nerves that were almost too high strung for everyday tempers, eyes that saw almost too far into heaven, and a mind that knew no limit. She adored Life and Love, and knew how to give them.'

She was filled with the spirit of enjoyment; her humour flowed over everything, even sometimes over her deepest feelings, but her tenderness never allowed her to use the lash of a witty tongue too freely.

Added to all this, Laura possessed what Mirabeau

called '*le don fatal de familiarité*,' and she always made straight for the heart of her friends. The skirmishes of wit and laughter and comment were well enough, but they were only skirmishes; the real battle raged round the heart. It was no wonder that so many fell—men and women—old and young—clever and stupid—good and bad; she drew people round her irresistibly.

And the poorer people of the world were not forgotten by her; all her life from childhood upwards, she taught children in the Traquair school on Sundays; she had a Bible-class for girls, and when in London went regularly down to Wapping, taking a special interest there in a crèche for babies which she had herself founded. Her being rushed out in sympathy as irresistibly towards suffering and sorrow, as it did towards joy.

There was also in her heart a passionate worship of nature, and an intimate love for the beautiful hills and moors of her home. Over and over again she speaks of them in her letters and journals, rejoicing in their colour and mystery, and in the symbolism which always to her imagination hung about the world. Writing to her friend, Doll Liddell, from The Glen, she says:

If only you could see it to-day. It is wonderful and mystic. The little baby clouds lying in the lap of the sky with the sun in their eyes, and great sheets of gold on the fields, and the whole world in an opal mood, except where the shadows lie like great deep pools under the trees. . . . Those great rolling billowy hills, with such sad pathetic memories written in their hearts.

In any walk of life Laura would have been loved and worshipped, but no doubt her power with her friends was increased by her surroundings, and the curious liberty she and her sisters had always been allowed. It was an adventure to go and stay at The Glen. Most of the usual conventions were neglected, and the ordinary barriers placed between young men and women pulled down; yet the atmosphere was pure and bracing. The fun was unflagging—brilliant talk, laughter and repartee, chaff, mimicry, discussion; a splendid outdoor life too, with fishing and shooting, and games of all kinds, and long tramps over the hills.

It was just possible, perhaps, to leave The Glen without falling in love with one of the sisters, it certainly was not possible to leave it without being intimate with one, probably both.

Alfred, writing to Mary Gladstone about falling in love, says :

More than ever I look for it in a sort of sanguine way to open out new hopes and new possibilities; but it comes in a slow, halting sort of fashion to '*nous autres Lytteltons*,' and I seem as impenetrable as the rest of them. But shall I write like this after a week at The Glen?

His first visit was in October 1884; it began somewhat disastrously, for Laura was ill, and had attempted to put him off, but the telegram or letter missed him. Alfred describes his arrival and his impressions to Lavinia :

I turned up on Saturday night to find to my consternation the only one I was the least intimate with, Laura, lying on a sofa near a big fire with a look of the most heart-breaking

pathos, and pretty withal. . . . However, this was Saturday, so that nothing could be done till Monday at any rate, and then she might be better and I might establish myself with the others, notably Margot. Ultimately I stayed till Wednesday and had, I must freely own, a most exciting and in many ways fascinating time. We went to bed very late and got up very early, and yet all the time I was there I never read a line even of a newspaper except in bed, and scarcely wrote a word—you know what this means, for as a rule it becomes absolutely a paramount necessity for me frequently to get out of *The Tribune*, and join the silent members, but here I went from one sister to the other up to Tuesday morning, and was kept in a sort of whirl of fun and acting and imitations of every sort of human being . . . and sentiment—and bright imaginings. . . . The last day everybody went except the mother and Laura, with the result that literally the entire day except the dinner and luncheon we talked *tête-à-tête*. I shall never believe it a month or so onwards . . . throughout her character lie beautiful golden hues of goodness and purity and enthusiasm.

Then he adds :

I doubt lest you will think I am in love, but I am beginning to think that my heart is of leather.

To Laura herself he wrote at Chester station on his way to Hawarden :

It is not a very propitious moment to begin a letter to you, very cold, very wretched, my luggage all lost, and the thought that *the* Brazilian nut of the year has been consumed and that no force or strategy can get another till a year has gone by. Yet I know that to write will dispel much of the gloom, for it accentuates the fact, which is so cheering, that I have gained a friend. Thus all day long as my body was borne along in the flying chain of carriages, my thoughts, instead of alighting as they generally do on the moors and quiet villages, or making haste up the hills where the farmhouses nestle in the trees, kept going back and back

again to you and The Glen—to the imitations which made a whole company tenants with us of the Doocot,<sup>1</sup> to the fun—the acting, the wistful pathos and delicate imaginings—I could almost hear you speaking, and for the life of me could no more read than I could yesterday . . . I was so pleased at your calling me wise. I will never mind your thinking me old if that will give me a chance of doing you any service of help, and advice, if ever I can. Nothing would make me happier than to have the opportunity. Nowadays the climax of friendship's opportunity is in frequency of five o'clock teas in London. Bless you always.

Laura herself wrote to Mary Gladstone and described Alfred in these words :

He has an infinite brightness in his very presence, and a womanlike sympathy which is very unusual in men and women. I think he is a child of Nature if ever she had a child, and somehow though the world has done its best to try and undermine his mother's influence (Nature's, I mean) he is still what he was born—has still the same big generous impulses—the same laughter that makes the little hills hop—and the same splendid animal spirits, though a little softened and subdued by the knowledge and the feeling of the Infinite Pathos of life—the same capability of enjoyment which with him is genius—the same quick affection and quick dislike—as for his faults—you know him better than I do—I suppose he has some.

Mary Gladstone was aware for some time of the turmoil roused in Alfred's heart, and having a great love for Laura, whose rare nature she had divined several years before, longed for a marriage with her cousin. But of course she could only watch in patience :

Can such a life as L. T.'s go on [wrote Alfred to her] without some anchorage. I feel just about good enough

<sup>1</sup> Laura and Margot's sitting-room.

for her to throw a grappling iron on to now and then, when a pause is necessary. Only there are such a lot who take that view.

And again with more gravity :

My constant prayer is that whatever may be the issue of my endeavours, that only may result which will carry with it blessedness as well as happiness to Laura.

In November they stayed in the same country house for a week at Stanway, Lord Elcho's place, and probably they met several times in London during the autumn months. The friendship deepened, and in December Alfred again went to stay at The Glen. There was the same enchantment, acting, fun, games, talk—but there were also deeper things. Laura had been through moving and saddening experiences ; among the men who loved her were some whom it wrung her heart to hurt, some about whom she blamed herself and her eager love of conquest. She tried to keep up friendship with all of them ; she poured herself out in sympathy and affection—only to find now and then that she had made the wounds deeper. And under all her revelry and enjoyment there was always the burning of her spirit ; her passionate desire to follow in her Lord's footsteps. Her diaries and her letters reveal how constant and how profound was her craving for peace and restfulness of heart. She possessed in full measure that sense of personal love for Christ, and communion with Him, which is the treasure of many Christians.

Alfred, though making such friends with Margot



that it seemed almost in doubt which of the two really held the first place in his so-called leathery heart, turned the stream of his young and fresh passion towards the beautiful little being who thought of him as a haven of peace, even while she claimed all the devotion of a lover. He hardly dared to believe that where so many had failed he might succeed, and perhaps would not have spoken as soon if it had not been for a suggestion from the younger sister that he would be wise to try. I will give in this sister's own vivid words a description of what happened on the evening of the 5th of January 1885 just before dinner :

Laura came into my room and asked me what she should put on (she had a dressing-room just off our bedroom, densely populated by books and hung with Burne-Jones's and illuminated by pansies). I said, 'Your white muslin. Mr. Lyttelton is strumming in the Doocot. Go and entertain him.' She told me afterwards that she tied her blue ribbon in her hair, and thrust her diamonds into her fichu, with lightning rapidity ; and with her eyes very big, and her whole being very small and shy, she went into our sitting-room—the Doocot—and shut the door, leaning against it.—Alfred was playing—he turned round and gazed at the little white figure so near him, so delicious in her dainty muslin next to his great rough travelling clothes—he was going to London that night. He began to break the conspicuous silence by saying something about not many leaving Glen without telling her they loved her, but it all broke down ; in a minute his great figure was bending over her, and she was in his arms.

He had to leave for London that night and begin

his legal work again—the long journey giving him time to dream with joy of the future. But he was bound by a strict promise to keep the engagement secret for a time. It was not till the 21st that he was able to tell a few people very near to him—his sisters, and his cousin Mary, who always received the confidences of the whole family. He writes to her :

Even now I can hardly believe that I have gained the love of so wondrous a little being. I have faith that God would not have suffered this to be after my prayers, not, not for happiness but for blessedness, unless there was to result from this a mutual comfort in the Lord, and that above and beyond the bright genius, and the laughter, and the tender pathos, there was also the love of things high and noble, and the faculty to draw from me, if I have them, all my best stops. You won't let it make any difference with you. I never could endure that supreme lover's selfishness which thinks it natural and harmonious that the deep affections of the heart should be altered or merged in that divine feeling. . . .

This sentence is characteristic of a man who understood hospitality in no restricted sense, and making fresh friends all his life, never lost his older ones.

There was something about the union of these two which appealed to the general sense of romance : both in their own spheres were remarkable for the combination of irresistible charm, and appeal to deeper admiration : both were young, vital, endowed with unusual powers of enjoyment ; and both in their several ways held an ideal in their hearts which made their love significant and

binding. In one of her letters to Mary Gladstone, Laura says :

Edward, his pet brother, . . . says that at the age of ten his tutor compared him to a running stream with the sun on it, which description holds good to this day. He is quite one of the most dazzling bits of Light God has put in the world.—Oh ! what shall I do when it is clouded . . . red dawns bring storm and tempest—shepherds like the grey mornings—ours is so red—will the orange cloud bars grow dark—will it get sombre and forbidding ? It cannot go on like this—our souls would grow contented with their wings as they are, and not grow any feathers. . . .

Several of Laura's greatest friends were also Alfred's : George Curzon, Gerald Balfour, Godfrey Webb, Doll Liddell, to name a few—and Frances Graham, who had held the first place in her heart since their meeting in Switzerland, when Laura, only seventeen, worshipped the brilliant girl a little older than herself. At Frances Graham's home in Grosvenor Place, Laura must have met many of the people who afterwards loved her. She became a child of the house, and I can vividly remember her, in a blue and white evening gown, coming into the drawing-room there with Alfred, soon after they were engaged, and walking straight into the arms of old Mr. Graham, whose beautiful face smiled at her with tenderness.

Among friends, therefore, but few introductions and conquests had to be made, and Mary Gladstone had interpreted her for a long time to many of Alfred's relations. It was a source of constant

delight to him to see how one by one the different members of his family fell in love with her. There were no exceptions—she charmed and fascinated each one, and roused in some who understood her intuitively a passion of admiration and respect, while all revelled in her gaiety and her unfailing humour. Kathleen Lyttelton was one of the first to recognise the new member of their family, and poured upon her that generous and stimulating love which those who received it will always look back to with gratitude. Perhaps among the sisters she came nearest to Lavinia, but indeed during her short year of kinship she left with one and all a coloured and fragrant memory, a rare spiritual influence.

In February Alfred took her to stay at Keble College, Oxford, with Lavinia Talbot and her husband. She writes of this again to Mary Gladstone :

Of all the days of my life yesterday was top of days. . . . He was transformed by Spirits and Health. He felt so well and was so paganly happy, and we did laugh so and talk and were so comf: . . .

And beside this there was the feeling of consecration of which both wrote, Alfred in a letter to his brother-in-law from Worcester, where he was working :

MY DEAR WARDEN,—Though there is so much correspondence I must send a Collins for the delicious Saturday to Monday, which has filled me with a store of brightness which may bridge much of the week's tough business. I had thought before, and so had she, of asking you just

once to pray with us, for at all the great episodes of my life I can look back with vivid recollections to the help which you have given me with such generous and unstinting hand. Beyond all hope the beauty and divine calm of the little Oratory and the noble and most earnest words, struck into our hearts and sent us back into the dusty roads of life, I trust with the right thoughts as to where alone true joys are to be found.

Laura's account written in her journal must also be given :

What I loved best in the blissful two days was his blessing Alfred and me in the Oratory—a tiny little chamber called Peace, with an open window through which I saw a frail little wintry tree tremble against the blue. I felt God was in that Oratory, and the Warden's beautiful words were echoes of His Blessing in Heaven. He left us after he had stood up and blessed us, and we knelt then and prayed silently for each other; and then with no one but God to see us, we kissed, and I felt earth far away and nothing but the sphere of love boundless and binding round me.

It must have been soon after this that Laura wrote to Alfred about his life, and what he must make of it—her words have something prophetic about them, both in their appeal to him and in their reference to the parting of Death :

Some one had said casually that he could not think of a noble point in a man's character that you had not by nature or cultivation. God has been a very tender School-master . . . and you have such a treasury, you know—it makes Life all the more difficult as so much more is required of you. I sometimes tremble at the eager waiting faces of those gone to the other side and of the expectant pride of your own Angel in Heaven. You have such a treasury ! It will be such a splendid gorgeous Life if you



live it to the top of its bent, which you must. And if anything happens, Alfred, before or after—if you are sad and all the mirage of many dreamed-of joys fades into sterner stuff, remember how in the Silence—the half-hour of Silence—your footsteps coming near—or—God forbid that it should be so—fainting into the distance,—will be one of the Sounds most listened for in ‘the vasty Halls of Death’—only I think it should be Life.

Oh! . . . if I die first, think of me listening for the great strong echo of those strides—think of how I used to love them on earth—think of how I shall love them in Heaven; and how the sound is dearer to me than the choir of God.

In March the doctors ordered Laura abroad to the South and the sun: she was tired out, and was to gather strength for the inevitable rush and scramble of a London wedding. Plans were made that she and Alfred should meet in Paris at Easter, but the month’s separation was a distress. The time was transfigured for him by her letters from Bordighera, ‘her unequalled letters’ as he called them. Laura was famous among her friends for her letters; all her characteristics were mirrored there: her humour, her passionate love of love, and beauty, her quick temper, her melancholy moods, her dreams, her religious fervour. They were above all emanations of the moment, intended only for the person to whom they were addressed, and therefore almost impossible to print, sometimes even to show. But many people felt that a day might come when she would be able to write in a wider sense, and weave the thoughts and fancies of her teeming brain into an enduring



shape. Her letters and diaries show great promise. She could make a haunting phrase; her words seem to throb sometimes, as if they were written to the rhythm of her heart-beats; her fancy embroidered everything, perhaps too lavishly, with stars and hearts and lilies and sunsets. Whether she possessed the sterner gifts of insight and construction, of impersonal judgment, it is impossible to say. She died at twenty-four, and up till then she had only followed Sir Philip Sidney's advice, 'Look in thy heart and write.'

At Bordighera, Laura obeyed her orders, and spent the month lying out in the sun as much as possible, with books to read, and a few friends to talk with. George Macdonald the author lived in the town. His house contained one very large and beautiful room in which the whole life of his family went forward, meals at one end, talk at another, and prayers everywhere. Each Sunday evening, friends and neighbours would come in, and George Macdonald read the Bible with them and expounded it in his own way. He was wonderful to look at, sitting in his big high-backed chair, with a plaid across his shoulders, and a light beside him: the rest of the room in darkness. Laura made great friends with the family;—long after when I went there I heard them talk of her, and could fancy her eager rapt face in that long room, listening to his words.

George Macdonald [she writes] talked of the only way lovers can meet, in God—and that in Him alone they can be one . . . the material part is transfigured into the

spiritual, through the touch of the God of Love—and the Angel of His Presence.

She seems always, even at this flower-time of love and happiness, to be aware of death; not in a morbid way, hardly with sadness; but her acute sense of the shortness of life, and perhaps of her own life, lent every now and again a great gravity, as of a wise child, to her words. She was an 'avertie' as Maeterlinck would have called her, one who *knew*. There is a passage in one of her letters, written from Paris, very characteristic of her, in its tenderness, fancy, and humour.

*April 1885.*

To-day walking down the Rue Helder we met a funeral. It was a girl who had died, and her coffin was covered with great white wreaths and masses of snowy flowers. The hearse was followed by a great many men, and a few sorrowing women. I watched it as it passed, and felt how right the men were to take off their hats as the sad cortège passed, how right, and how beautiful. I always think the body is but a window from which the soul leans out (some farther than others) so that the blue rushing air may refresh it, and the roses and lilies may grow redder and whiter in its Presence, and when it has been too long pent up, and the window is very wide open, it waits for some early dawn and steals away silently through the morning, lingering just a little where it loved the garden most, and then melts out of sight like the stars: but after all there is the poor little deserted window where it dwelt so long, why not give it roses and violets. The little white soul loved it while it was here: and it was good—and the sun came in . . . Oh . . . When I leave my window, and steal through the flowers out into the open sky, you must not mind the window—follow my soul, come to me soon, soon . . . for I don't think Gabriel was meant to

be a comfort to me—he never would, I know, and oh I should be lonely.

Writing to Laura on the 28th of March 1885, from Carlton House Terrace, Alfred says :

. . . I have spent rather an interesting Sunday—this morning to St. Paul's with Lucy, almost the only one of our family in London—generally we have the sisters and M.G., for it is the anniversary of May's death and the day has its saddest and tenderest associations. It is as easy to recollect as yesterday tho' ten years have gone by : the first great baptism of sorrow. Before it I thought I had realized death and had often pondered upon it, but in reality I had not thought of it the least as something which could arrive and break into our wonderful and most joyous company. Before 1875 there never was any family in the world, I believe, whose meetings were so intensely festal, or whose spirits were so independent of 'amusements.' Those who have many amusements have no true joy. I think if you had The Glen and a few ponies, and possibly your old boy, that you would be as happy as ever you could be. May would have thought you such a tremendous break, and you and she and Francie would have settled all sorts of heresies between you as to the unprofitableness of man and the descent of women when they became associated with that fallen sex. I had all sorts of beautiful thoughts about you, darling, in St. Paul's, only I felt so widowed without your sweet presence. God help you and bless you always and help me to be a help to you. . . .

And again on the 30th of March 1885 :

. . . I can't get over the sadness which your letter this morning gave me with its piteous account of yourself and wistful yearnings after brighter moods. I read a little bit of it to Lucy, and she did appreciate the pretty plaintive words and the exquisite style in which they were writ.

Heaven knows how my heart yearns for you. I dine with beautiful Lady Brownlow to-night and shall have a very sympathetic ear for talk about you. This is the longest bit of uninterrupted work in the year, and I just begin to feel it rather—so on Thursday I shall go with two old Cambridge friends for three days into the Kentish fields and simply walk all day in the air and be free of all the world and of law and of every care. . . . Then to work again on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday . . . and then, and then, the best moments of the year. . . .

He writes of the exhilaration of his spirit just before starting :

21 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE,  
1st April 1885.

It is delicious to think that for four days there will be no work, no court, no manuscript to read—but the most beautiful country to walk in—oh, what would I not give to have you here to enjoy the spring! I always feel like a three-year-old directly I breathe the delicious country scents and feel once more a free man!

And again while he is actually on the little tour :

BEAR HOTEL, WANTAGE.

We had a magnificent walk to-day starting from the most beautiful forest, and there we roamed for about two hours, and then over a wind-swept moor long and formidable of ascent, the wind making the noses of my comrades blue and mine red. . . . Do you think it rather pagan, Darling, taking a walking tour on Good Friday? I used to when I was small, but now I think that nothing which brings one face to face with the hills and rivers and sweet country air can do any harm, or indeed anything but good.

There were five delightful days in Paris, and then he had to go back to work, and she remained to finish getting her clothes. She describes the surprise of the dressmakers at the slowness of her

figure, and her own amusement at the delicate shades of nuance between a fiancée's dress and a married woman's.

WORTH'S (Le petit Salon rouge).

I am waiting here at Worth's with a wedding gown spread out on a pair of chairs, so I feel in sympathetic company. . . . Il faut souffrir pour être même gentille ! It is rather a break to hear them all say, ' Ah, Madame, il doit vous aimer beaucoup : votre fiancé ! Il doit vous trouver bien blanche et bien mignonne. Quel petit dos, mon Dieu, ça n'existe presque pas,' and for once I feel I love a dress-maker ! And then I tell them how they ought to envy me, and thrill them with stories of your strength and goodness !

And while on the subject of clothes one more extract from an earlier letter must be given :

GROSVENOR SQ., Feb. '85.

I have tried on four gowns and feel hopelessly married, because one is supposed to have a little something not *jeune fille* about one's future gowns—isn't it awful, Alfred, only p'raps no one but me would see the difference—the dignity-giving flounce ! and the wifely widening skirts, and the little 'no more proposal' tucker. Can you see all the subtle changes ?

And Alfred pleads :

Don't get matronly gowns, my pretty babe—but girlish ones—plain colours—white generally—unless you are bored with every one falling in love ; no one can help it, you know, when you have white and pale blue.

On the 21st of May 1885 they were married in St. George's, Hanover Square, the church chosen not because of its fashion, but because it was associated in Laura's mind with the great moments of her own story, and those of her sisters.



The short year of life together was very happy ; beginning with the first few days at Melchett Court, Lady Ashburton's place, and in London at 21 Carlton House Terrace, lent to them by Lady Frederick Cavendish.

Laura was always surrounded by people of all sorts ; she was busy finding and furnishing the house where they were to live, 4 Upper Brook Street, given her by her father ; she kept up her visits to the crèche in Wapping. And then came the hope of a child ;—to Laura, who as she said always loved cradles and cradled things, the hope was a glory. She had a passionate love of children and a natural affinity with them ; no trouble was too much to give happiness to a child.

In November they went to Mells, and Alfred wrote from there to St. John Brodrick :

MELLS PARK, FROME,  
*November 9th, 1885.*

DEAR OLD FRIEND,—I hadn't the least forgotten that I owed you a letter, but, as I have often told you in ancient days, the whole distinction between letters of business and letters of pleasure is, that one may write the latter when the mood seizes one and not otherwise. You may reckon it an absolute certainty that sooner or later I shall always reply. I admit, having said this much, that the engagement period seems to have absolutely dried up my letter-writing faculties, if ever I had any. During the holydays, when I used generally to write a good few, I can't remember having written above one. The three weeks I have been at work have been extremely prosperous ; if I can keep it up I shall do very well even with the change of Government. I heard to my great rejoicing that you were certain to get in—my informant was Charlie Farmer, an Etonian and a



Surrey man. I hope to goodness he spoke with authority. I think you might do some effective chaff by reference to the fact that one Liberal leader has called another Rip Van Winkle, viz. a confirmed drunkard who wakes up after thirty years and returns to abuse his wife as before.

I shall be glad when you are back in London with your sweet spouse. The house is going to be a 'succès fou.' But we shall probably exchange it shortly for the St. George's Union. Best love to Hilda.<sup>1</sup>—Ever your affectionate

A. L.

Laura stayed on at Mells for a few days when Alfred went back to work, and he writes to her :

. . . I am not going to Stafford at all. I had two good cases waiting for me here and they clashed with my Stafford work which I have had to abandon. . . . I shall be ready to receive you to-morrow with open arms. The lights seem all blown out in mid-day when her sweet eyes are absent.

We bowled Mrs. Welldon over to-day with a good deal of quiet satisfaction. She was more truthful than usual; Coleridge was perfect in his dealing with her.

MRS. WELLDON. 'My lord, you have said that I am troublesome and foolish.'

JUDGE. 'I was not aware that you were a thought-reader, Mrs. Welldon, for I certainly said no such thing.'

. . . Mind that you come back to-morrow, and resist Frances and Jack, and the babies who I expect are all on your little lap. But give them my best love.

Laura wrote to Mr. Liddell from Panshanger, Lord Cowper's house, on the last day of 1885 :

I went out for a lovely walk and was blown to Glen in soul. It was such a blessing leaving London. I did so pine and long for the free sky, with all the space for one's longing and all the blue distance for one's rest.

<sup>1</sup> Lady Hilda Brodrick.

And again from London at the end of March 1886 :

If you knew how strange one's wanderings are and how the isles of the blest seem very near when there is a great possibility of Death—I lie awake at night and think such purple thoughts all aglow with the very passion of improbability—but the colours are all warm and calm and you would be happy in them.

I can remember at some dinner party when the women were alone together, Laura eagerly questioning one of them about the best way to bring up a child, full of laughter and merriment, and yet perhaps really hoping for hints, from the somewhat stiff matron who listened to her probings with amazement. And again I remember her coming up the aisle at Mary Gladstone's wedding in St. Margaret's on the 2nd of February—looking ill and oppressed—but her face lighting up as she greeted friends. She worked hard at all the details of her new home in Brook Street, arranging furniture and pictures, getting Alfred's room finished, buying things which took her fancy. Long before the rooms were ready people thronged in and out, some trying to help her, but most, unconsciously seeking the stimulus of her charm and brilliant vitality.

Margot writes :

It must have been about the 8th of April 1886, that I went to say good-bye to Laura. . . . I found her alone, sitting in Alfred's room on the ground floor in her tea-gown. I was sad at the idea of leaving, and sat on the sofa beside her. She put her arms round my neck . . . we talked about her doctor and various intimate affairs. Then she said she was pretty sure she would die with her baby. I combated the idea robustly.

She listened with wide eyes looking into mine to see if I really had no anxiety. I felt no anxiety—therefore showed none. She said that it was not from any sudden impulse that she felt she would die, but that the thought had come into her being for days past, and that she had written her will. I asked her if she had said this to any one. ‘No, only to Alfred of course.’ I asked her if he was anxious. She said not at all, that it had only made him sad, but that he had said much the same to her as I had. I again assured her that every woman of great sensibility felt the same in these tremendous moments—my heart felt heavy all the same—I could see that all the words I said turned into vapour—they did not reach her.

Margot asked to see the will, and began to read it, but Laura, expecting Alfred’s return, begged her to put it back in the drawer.

Then she said : ‘When I am dead and all of you round me in the room, I want you there and then to read this will out loud—say I told you to, and then give it to Alfred—swear you won’t forget!’

I swore and we had no sooner put it in her drawer, and sat down, than Alfred came into the room. He came in with the wind in his face, a vision of life and manhood—he kissed her hands, and sat with his arm round her on the sofa. He asked what we had been talking about. Feeling rather troubled I said nothing, but Laura put her hand over his mouth—he put her head against his shoulder guessing at once—I fell in with all his scoldings, and then said I must catch my train. Laura got up with an anxious look at me. She gave me flowers out of a vase, and *La mare au diable* of Georges Sand to read in the train: she kissed me many times, and whispered I was not to be sad, nor to forget about the will.

So Margot went to one of her sisters in the country for some hunting, ready to return at any moment, but not uneasy about Laura.

A few people outside seem to have recognised that the life of so ardent a being, lavish in the gift of herself, could hardly last in this rough world. Either she would have to change, or to die. There are some who do not know how to defend themselves, who cannot refuse or withdraw, and whose sympathy and companionship is needed and clamoured for. Such natures spend themselves, and if the body is strong, all goes well ; if it is not, then here and there people wonder. But perhaps no one guessed in what sudden and swift tones Death was to call her.

On the night of the 16th of April 1886, her child after a terrific struggle was born. But the effort had been too much for her little frail body. She knew she had brought a man child into the world ; her eyes followed Alfred round the room. Then she lapsed into unconsciousness. Hope and fear alternated for a day or two. Margot hurried up from the country, her face all bandaged after a bad hunting accident. She arrived late on Tuesday night, but was not allowed to see Laura till the next day, when she stood for a moment at the foot of the bed.

She writes :

Her little tiny face had shrunk away like a child's, her eyelashes lay like a black wall on her white face ; her hair hung in heavy folds on the pillow and thrown across her square brow—her mouth tightly shut . . . she opened her eyes after a silence when I heard the hovering of Death, and my heart stopped—her beautiful eyes were large with fancy, and an indescribable wonder lit them ; they gleamed like strange jewels ; she fixed them on me and my heart

leapt, and my lips moved, 'Laura.' The sound died on my lips—she didn't know me. They took me away. After that I never felt she could live.

The next day the doctors went into the room and walked out again; I saw by Alfred's face that all hope was over;—the nurses, who loved Alfred, watched him. He showed amazing courage and freedom from self pity. He walked in and out of the room, quite simply without a tear, stopping to pray by her bed for long stretches. He seemed removed from us, as if he were travelling part of the way with her, and yet thoughtful for us all. The last words I heard her say to Charty were, 'I think God has forgotten me.'

All through Good Friday she lingered, and early on Saturday morning—Easter Eve—Margot was awakened and told to come.

The room was full but I saw no one. I lay with my arm under my darling, with no one to stop me, like the old days after our quarrels, when we crept into each other's bed to 'make it up.' Alfred was kneeling with one of her hands on his forehead, and Charty kneeling at her feet. She looked just the same,—a deeper shadow ran under her eyebrows, and her mouth seemed harder shut. My cheek was against her shoulder—her warm soft shoulder, and my arm was under her sharp thin little spine. For a minute or more we lay quite quiet, with the sun playing on the window-blinds, fresh from the Dawn—then her breathing stopped—she gave a little shiver and died.

Margot remembered almost directly what she had promised Laura.

I ran down to fetch the manuscript—it was exactly where she had put it. I went up to Alfred and told him what she had asked me to do. The room was dark with people, a tall man, gaunt and fervid, was standing up reading a prayer (this was Albert Lyttelton). When he had finished I read the will through out loud.



Laura had left her personal treasures to those she loved best, and the list was unfinished: it would have been a very long one. But she began it with a beautiful gift of lovely words to Alfred. She had asked that they might be read aloud at once; she wanted him to hear them in his first moment of desolation; she wanted every one to know her happiness.

Surely it cannot be wrong to write them down here.

I have not much to leave behind me should I die next month, having my treasure deep in my heart, where no one can reach it, and where even Death cannot enter. But there are some things that have lain at the gate of my Joy House, that in some measure have the colour of my life in them, and would by rights of love belong to those who have entered there.—I should like Alfred to give these things to my friends, not because my friends will care so much for them—but because they will love best being where I loved to be.

I want first of all to tell Alfred that all I have in the world, and all I am and ever shall be, belongs to him, and to him more than any one, so that if I leave away from him anything that speaks to him of a joy unknown to me—or that he holds dear for any reason wise or unwise, it is his, and my dear Friends will forgive him and me.

So few women have been as happy as I have been every hour since I married—so few have had such a wonderful sky of love for their common atmosphere, that perhaps it will seem strange, when I write down, that the sadness of Death and Parting is greatly lessened to me by the fact of my consciousness of the eternal indivisible oneness of Alfred and me—I feel as long as he is down here—I must be here,—silently, secretly sitting beside him, as I do every evening now—however much my soul is on the other side—and that if Alfred too were to die, we should be as we were on Earth—love as we did this year—only fuller,



quicker, deeper than ever—with a purer Passion and a wiser worship. Only in the meantime whilst my body is hid from him, and my eyes cannot see him, let my trivial toys be his till the morning comes, when nothing will matter, because all is Spirit.

So ended this short and eager life. Laura had always given herself generously, loved this poor world and the people in it, with every breath of her being, but never lost the vision, never failed to reach out towards a higher life than she could find. She was a flame, beautiful, dancing, ardent ; leaping up from the earth in joyous rapture, touching every one with fire as she passed. The wind of life was too fierce for such a spirit—she could not live in it. Surely it was Love that gathered her.

She wrote once :

Tell me you love me and always will. Tell me, so that when I dream I may dream of Love, and when I sleep dreamless Love may be holding me in his wings, and when I wake Love may be the spirit in my feet, and when I die Love may be the Angel that takes me home.

## CHAPTER VII

### ALFRED CHRISTOPHER

1886-1888

Your loss is rarer ; for this star  
Rose with you thro' a little arc  
Of heaven, nor having wandered far,  
Shot on the sudden into dark.

TENNYSON.

ALFRED had many devoted friends ; often he said in after life that he could never forget what Arthur Balfour had been to him in his sorrow, the friend who from early youth till the last hour of his life was always his close companion. And above all he had Laura's sisters, who showered a wealth of love and devotion upon him. Lady Ribblesdale—Charty—became his dearest friend, suffering with him through the first days of his anguish, and always after, doing everything in her power to make life easier and happier for him.

Alfred writes to Mary Drew on the 14th of May 1886, thanking her for sending some one's letter :

. . . But it was a blow not to have a letter from you. I am too human to do without them—and no one has given me such genuine proofs of real knowledge of her as you. . . . But I can't write at all tho' I can work, and have got to a certain extent back into routine : it takes out of me to write so, and I can't do it even intelligibly oftentimes. The silence grows so intolerable. . . . Already, however, her life 'so impeded here' stands out in more radiant vision, and her words so profound, and so beautiful, have

the added force which belongs to death. Listen to Margot. . . . 'I went to the little church (at The Glen)—at first it seemed very dark, but as my eye grew accustomed to it, I saw the lambs huddled up against the tombstones . . . and I thought of all you had said on the hill-tops to me, and prayed that my now loosened grasp of the world might continue, and not merely be a new departure born of tears, and necessitated by mourning. . . . Kneeling on the ground that covers Laura, and feeling the same wind blowing over us both, I felt perhaps God was not far off and her spirit was near.'

And on the 21st of May he writes again :

I have just returned from the little Church where the Holy Communion consecrated our wedding. There was only the ordinary service there this morning, and there was the prettiest softest sunshine contrasting with the thunder of last year—but the most beautiful sun in God's world is darkness to me in that place, where the little grey figure and pale mobile face was. But the service was very beautiful, and I remembered so well the exact place where I looked at the book, and a thrill went right through my heart at 'from his wife Laura'—Read again, if you have it with you, Carlyle's letter to his mother on the death of his father—nothing can exceed its beauty and grandeur. I enclose you Uncle W.'s letter. I have a copy of it in a book, and so am not afraid to send it. You will of course send it back some time.

This letter from Mr. Gladstone must be given :

Certainly you two who are still one, were the persons whom in all the vast circuit of London one would have pointed to, as exhibiting more than any other the promises and the profit of *both* worlds. The call upon you for thanksgiving seemed greater than on any one ; you will not deem it lessened now.

How eminently true it is of her, that in living a short time she fulfilled a long time. If life is measured by intensity

hers was a very long life, and yet with her rich development of mental gifts, purity and singleness made her one of the little children of whom and of whose—is the kingdom of Heaven.

Bold indeed would it be to say that such a being died prematurely.

All through your life, however it may be prolonged, what a precious possession to you she will be. And in giving her to your bodily eye and in taking her away, the Almighty has specially set His seal upon you.

To Peace and to God's gracious mercy let us heartily, yes cheerfully, commend her.

Alfred went on with his work at the Bar unceasingly. No doubt this was the best thing he could do; even while it tired him, the hours of hard mental grind were a rest to his sad heart. Laura had written to him once :

I often think of death—and wonder how long God is going to let us live together before one of us leads the way through the Ante-chamber of Life. . . . We must not feel alone—we never will—we will go hand in hand to the Door—and we will speak to each other as we pass thro'—and our lips will touch—and before the other goes back to his waiting he will maybe catch a glimpse of the Light thro' the great door and that may comfort him.

But the body bends under the stress of sorrow, and towards the end of July, Alfred began to feel that he must get away out of England to fresh scenes and faces.

On the 30th of July he writes to Edward Talbot from Stafford Assizes :

MY DEAR OLD WARDEN,—I wrote a letter—8 sides—to Lavinia last Sunday. . . .

I am half glad that it hasn't reached her, for it was a

very miserable one and would have taken out of you both—and I was sorry after I had sent it off that I had done so—for letters stamp themselves terribly upon their readers, and sometimes convey only half the truth. I get along pretty well when I have active work, and when I am with others—but for me who used to love a good deal of solitude, it is strange and sad enough to dread my own company. For when I am alone I feel sometimes almost despair.<sup>1</sup> The old difficulties are increased a hundredfold, and I feel myself, not as I should be, strengthened and refined by the intense suffering I have borne, but rather the reverse. For these things, though I dread my holiday as breaking up routine, I trust that a complete change in far away countries may do good. For something in my present state may be due to mere bodily depression. . . . I liked dear old Z's letters ; some day I hope to see him—very bravely he seems to be bearing himself in a situation more desolate than mine. I wish I could give an account of myself, or that others could do so, which would be of any service to him. But I can do nothing except say this—that it is my unalterable conviction that there is strength, and beauty, and glory, to be won from these awful events, if only one is man enough to struggle bravely, and if the body only can be subdued to the spirit.

Edward Talbot's reply must have been a help to Alfred :

You are face to face with the realities of your great *human* trials, with all their humbling power, the realities in and among which God has appointed the discipline of Immortal Spirits to be worked out, strange as it may seem. And so it means great power of future sympathy with, and strength for others. And as every one who has known anything of the greater troubles knows, there is a kind

<sup>1</sup> To Lavinia on the same subject two days earlier : 'It is too strange to feel, as I do now, actual dread of the holiday, the bare approach of which has hitherto made my blood dance : but I have never felt myself for a day, except when I have had work to do.'



of exaltation about them, a true exaltation, but one from which in this present time it is necessary for us to come down, as from a mount of God, into the tumult and noises of this lower and carnal world.

But, dear fellow, we cannot doubt what He means for you, that He will accomplish His work in one, upon whom He has set His mark and Name. For surely we may believe that He has, in His goodness, shown in you the Strength and Likeness of the Cross ; in the submission which He enabled you to make, in the instinct which enabled you to discern, and accept, the truest meaning of a great sorrow as Sacrifice.

To Katherine Lyttelton, wife of his brother Neville, then in India with her husband, he wrote from Hagley on the 3rd of August 1886, explaining why he had abandoned the idea of coming out to visit them :

HAGLEY HALL,  
STOURBRIDGE, 3rd August 1886.

DEAREST KATHERINE,—My last letter and all it said was meant for you as well as for Nevy, as you rightly surmised. And he will know that this is for him also. On the whole, after much debate I gave in to the strong dissuasion which was made against my Indian projects. I have always been rather *hors de combat* after ten months of the Bar work—but now, of course, I am more so than usual. I am lighter than I was at Eton and don't sleep very grandly. The result of so long a contest with the heat would, they say, be probably very injurious, and though I was greatly tempted and would really do almost anything to see you both, I have finally abandoned the idea this summer, and go with Spencer (and possibly Jack and Margot Tennant) to America. It is very sad to dread the holydays—but the only times since, in which I have felt myself at all, have been those when I have had the hardest work, and I don't know how I shall get along at all in the long and vacant days of travel. George Curzon



was coming with me, but the meeting of Parliament for definite business has put an end to his hopes. It was dear of you, Katherine, to write so plainly about the drawbacks of India at this time, for I know it must have been tempting to have any one out to see you—even such a broken fellow as I am now.

Future arrangements are indefinite. The Ribblesdales at present live with me in Brook Street, and it makes a most successful ménage. He a cultivated and rather 'booky' man, excellent company. She, delightful, sympathetic, womanly, with a gentle and sunny humour all her own, and a temper which is always good, though capable of being aroused on a few topics. It is uncertain how long they will remain, but it must be a great pang for me whenever they go.

The baby does well, and I have seen looks of her in him at rare intervals; with a great interest in the external world, and a mobile expressiveness of face, he continues in a general spirit of wrathful dissatisfaction with the condition of life.

Bless you always, dear brother and sister. This letter has been very egotistical, but I expect you like it so.—Ever your aff.

A. LYTTTELTON.

It was a great disappointment to Alfred that his friend, George Curzon, was unable to travel with him :

THE GLEN.

INNERLEITHEN, 17th August 1886.

MY DEAR GEORGE,—It is good of you to have thought of coaching me up in the mysteries of American geography. The heart is gone completely out of me, about the whole thing, but I know full well how sorry you are not to come, *and no one* knows better than myself how impossible it would have been for you to have abandoned the first days of, I trust, a noble Parliamentary career. I have had so often to contend with the rooted middle-class idea that

a youthful member of the aristocracy does not mean business, that I am fully in sympathy with a determined effort to give no basis whatever to it.

Now bless you, my precious old boy—be very happy—and make a great name.—Ever your aff. A. L.

A week or two later, writing to Lavinia from The Glen, he says :

We sail by the *Parisian* on Thursday. I expect nothing so I cannot be disappointed. I am a deal better already for the few days of grand air here. They are all very dear to me—we often speak of Laura, and it doesn't jar, but the little grave in the high wind-swept churchyard fills me with unutterable longings. God bless you, my little darling sister.

The trip to America was a success as far as health was concerned. His travelling companions were Jack Tennant, Laura's younger brother, and Spencer Lyttelton, his own brother.

Alfred often spoke of the impression the great Yosemite Valley made upon him. He had a story, too, of the rage they all felt at a railway station in the far west, when a fraudulent innkeeper made them miss the only train for twenty-four hours, in order to detain them in the bare, arid, dusty settlement. Alfred would finish the story : ' But we *did* him—for we all climbed into the trucks of a luggage train that was passing—it was horrible . . . we had hours of it, but we *did* him.'

Coming home early in October they met very heavy seas, and Alfred used to sit right out on the bowsprit, and ride the waves with great exhilara-

tion. The sensation of going down, down into the green cold depths and rising again into the sunlight was a perpetual joy to him to remember. He settled to work again in London and writes to Lavinia from Stafford Assizes :

*8th November '86.*

I had expected to come to you my second day in England, and was hugging myself at the prospect of telling you all about everything. I *am* the better for it in all ways. The quick return to work after April, though the right thing to do—I would do it again—was a frightful strain in my state of mind then, but it was absolutely necessary to have the obligation of other men's affairs to look after in order that part only of the day should be spent in the agonising thoughts of fresh grief. But as you get a little bit away and the wounds begin to close a little, it is good to have the long days to oneself and to books, when one can travel back over every day of the sunny time, and when one can find in beautiful poetry above all, deeper and more hidden beauties, which no one can quite appreciate without experience of their truth. And this is what I miss in London—for the evenings are my only free time, and often in them I have to think of the next day's case, and still oftener I am too tired to read anything the least serious. . . . I have felt the pleasure of coming back more than I thought I could have done. I stayed with Lucy for a few days and her care of me was too pathetic—the most lovely dinners imperilling the stomach precariously fed in foreign climes—and tender solicitude in all directions. No man has ever been more spoilt than I, both by my own, and by darling Laura's relations. And then, too, there was a great moment when I first saw one of her sisters, Lucy Smith, and heard the voice once more, which must always thrill me to the core, and make me love all that belongs to her which can so remind me . . . I shall keep the baby for talking to you, but he is just noble at this moment.

During the summer of 1887, and for a short time afterwards, Lord and Lady Ribblesdale lived with him in Brook Street, Charty lavishing all her love and care upon Alfred Christopher, her sister's baby. She had a delightful personality and, what Burne-Jones said of her, a beautiful presence. She was tall and fair, with rippling golden hair which seemed to express her eagerness and vitality: her power of enjoyment was very great, and she flung herself into the pursuit of the moment with perpetual pleasure. She was loving and unselfish, and above all limpid in her openness and candour. Like a child she used no artifices, but loved and disliked, praised and blamed without pretence: and she had countless friends who enjoyed her impulsive judgments and her warm sympathies.<sup>1</sup> In August of this year various causes brought the combined housekeeping to an end, and it was arranged that Lucy Cavendish should come to Brook Street in the autumn, and mother Alfred's child, as she had in her young girlhood mothered him.

He was able gradually to take up some of his old pursuits, and to interest himself in the outside world and its politics. During the autumn

<sup>1</sup> Her sister Margot describes her: 'Charty Ribblesdale was a remarkable woman. Absolutely unworldly and fearless, very capable without being very intellectual, and an eternal child. To modify herself or her opinions was an impossibility to her. She was the most unselfish, unvain woman I ever knew, and nearly always did her hair and put on her hat without looking in the glass at all. She was extraordinarily amusing. She sent a famous telegram of advice to a cool-blooded candidate about to address his constituents for the first time, "Mind you hit below the belt."'

holiday he sends the following letter to Mary Drew :

HAGLEY HALL,  
STOURBRIDGE, *4th September 1887.*

DEAREST MARY,—I have been meaning to write every day for the last week, but it has been greatly occupied ; but now I have settled down to one of my quiet times in the holidays, when I read, and seek much profit thereout. One of the advantages of the holidays is that my mind gets out of the groove of law in which it compulsorily moves, and swings back by a natural equilibrium to all the things upon which it naturally loves to dwell. Thus I get time to go back again to the sunrise of my life, in the autumn of '84, and to retrace the sweet footsteps of my little Darling till the time when she left us wondering. I like the amusements and enjoy them, but of course it is and must ever be, in a different way. I have been through the extracts which Doll Liddell made from Laura's letters, and am now going through mine. I have great doubt whether any are of a kind to be collected in book form, and shown to others than the owner or his *very* nearest friends. But you might go through yours again, and let me see the result of anything you do.

In October to Mary :

You will think of me starting again in Brook Street. No one as affectionate as I am, and having as good a temper (for it is a pretty good one, isn't it ? and never at any rate a sour one) can fail to make a good job of it with Lucy, who is one of the most splendid creatures in the world. The fear is that her unselfishness will spoil me, and that the need of thinking for another will never be pressed on me. It would be wretched that the bright joy, and keen fears and efforts, of formerly should be replaced by the sort of dead level of material ease.

Mrs. Humphry Ward dedicated her first book,



*Robert Elsmere*, to Laura's memory, and she sent the proof to Alfred asking for his permission.

3 PAPER BUILDINGS,  
TEMPLE, E.C., 19th January 1888.

MY DEAR MRS. WARD,—I only got the proofs late last night. I trust that you will not think I have kept them too long. I feel nothing but pleasure in the connecting of any one I love with a book which from even my hurried reading I perceive is written in a noble spirit of noble things. I leave the dedication absolutely to your discretion, and you have my freest consent to put it in any form you like. Possibly you might like to convey that sympathy of mind and character rather than identity of opinion was the basis of your love for Laura and of hers for you. But it may be difficult to manage this, and if it be so don't worry about it. I don't suggest it on my own behalf or on any one else's who has a right to be consulted. I look forward immensely to digesting that which I have only devoured.

Please get it out quickly.—Believe me, dear Mrs Ward,  
yours most sincerely,

ALFRED LYTTELTON.

He wrote again when the book was out, with the following dedication to the memory of Mrs. Ward's two friends, T. H. Green and Laura Lyttelton :

Separated, in my thought of them, by much diversity of  
circumstance and opinion ;  
Linked, in my faith about them, to each other,  
and to all the Shining Ones of the past,  
By the Love of God and the  
Service of man.

4 UPPER BROOK STREET,  
25th February 1888.

MY DEAR MRS. WARD,—I must write at once to offer you my deepest thanks for the perfect dedication, beautiful



in its pathos, its tenderness, and just and delicate expression of that which is so hard to convey in words.

I read it this morning with blinding tears and yet with truest gratitude.—Ever yours sincerely,

ALFRED LYTTTELTON.

Alfred took up hunting and greatly enjoyed the Saturdays, keeping his mounts sometimes at Easton Grey, his sister-in-law's house, sometimes in Leicestershire. He rode well and fearlessly, and adored his horses. The Ribblesdales were his constant companions in this sport; Charty let him feel literally that her home was his, made so not only by the strong affection there was between them, but by the tender bonds of mutual memory and love.

From London on the 14th of November 1886 he writes :

After Dec. 8th I shall be alone in Brook Street and much disposed for moving out, though the infant makes a large difference in the feeling of isolation which I experienced the first few days I spent there before he came up. He has got to know me a little, and he is beginning to throw a gleam upon my life.

It seemed as if his sky were growing lighter, when sorrow clouded it once more. The little boy had always been excitable, and intelligent beyond his years, and in 1888 he developed symptoms of tubercular meningitis. Everything possible was done; Lucy Cavendish adored him exactly as if he were her own child, his nurse was a most devoted and capable woman. But the disease is fatally

rapid. On the 19th of May, having been unconscious for some hours, he died.

Alfred writes to Lavinia from The Glen, where the child was buried on the 21st of May, the anniversary of his father and mother's wedding day:

I was looking so anxiously for your letter which was delayed, and was just about to write, when it came, for though there is an intense weariness about many letters I longed for yours. I have been really comforted by the thought of his being with my little Darling. She once wrote to Edward that if she died, she didn't think her baby could live without her, and in the few moments when I can faithfully realise him with her, the thought that he takes with him to her, on his fresh lips and cheeks, my poor kisses is inexpressibly sweet. Such an unspotted little messenger from me, who feel so coarse and low by their side. And here, too, everything in the funeral service aided me, for unlike almost every other funeral I ever recollect, not one jarring note struck on the utter pathos and beauty of it all. The tiny coffin which the earth seemed to fold so gently, the few shepherds round about. The Glen school children throwing in the flowers, and with such pretty grace, and all round, the hills which she loved so, sleeping in the sun.

The dreadful thought is the future, without the point and centre which he would have made, and without the stimulus not to be unworthy in his eyes of his mother. I looked so earnestly all my bachelor days to marriage helping me, with all its sweet responsibilities, to be better, and now I am so fearfully discouraged, and fear sinking, or rather having nothing to help me to rise above the selfish life so dismally easy to live in London. I don't think that I can face living in the poor little house any more—or the domestic life which has now lost its *raison d'être*. Possibly I may take rooms with another man—but it would perhaps be best to live alone.

But it is well not to make up one's mind to anything at first, and these things are still fluid, though events such as dear Lucy going to Africa, and Charles resigning his place in London, seem to point rather to her return to No. 21.

The following letter to Mary Drew of August in this year refers to the question of preparing a memoir of Laura's short life :

I know none possessed of the combination of literary power, comprehensive insight, and delicate and fine sympathy which would be required to paint even the roughest sketch of her. I doubt if even Ruskin could present those fine gradations from grave to gay, from deep spirituality to delicious human weakness, the darling little ways so freely lavished around—the spirits and the melancholy—the courage and the tremors, the charming little flirtations, and the deep trustful loyalty and devotion to one. With all the help of her personality, her manner, her unequalled letters, no one in her lifetime quite understood the whole of her, though you had as fine an observation and insight and a better opportunity than almost any one. And I myself was only able to, by the mystic and blessed light cast round our blended lives by the grace and power of a perfect marriage. When this is so, I may be forgiven the view that it is far better that we should cherish the intangible and golden memories deep in our hearts, than break in on them by the crude fabrics which words compose. And yet there is a feeling which is at the root of your desire, I mean the reluctance to refuse to others some share in our inheritance, and the fear that the vision, if left without record, may fade. I doubt myself whether any thing could be *well* done by extracting letters or journals ; let me hear what you would suggest—at least there can be no harm in trying some extracting, and seeing how far it is satisfactory in result. I begin October somewhere or other in a flat ; with or without a man companion is not yet settled. Bless you, I am writing all day, and literally can't go on.

Thus in three short years Alfred had known the greatest happiness and the greatest sorrows which life can hold. He was not unworthy of these experiences. As he himself wrote to Edward Talbot, it was his 'unalterable conviction that there is strength and beauty and glory to be won from these awful events.'

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE BAR AND POLITICS

1888-1891

Piety is in the man, noble human valour, bright intelligence, ardent proud veracity, light and fire in none of their many senses wanting for him, but abundantly bestowed : a kingly kind of man.—Carlyle's *Life of Sterling*.

AFTER the autumn holidays Alfred went back to London and to work, and started life alone in a flat at 127 Mount Street. Charty Ribblesdale had arranged it for him, and filled it full of all the familiar furniture and pictures from Brook Street. He writes to his sister Meriel (Mrs. John Talbot) on November 22nd, 1888 :

The flat is very delightful to look at and a model of comfort. It is better I should learn to be more alone. I feel it at present ; but I do much more work and get more thought.

His life for the next three or four years was devoted mainly to his profession. His success, as has been said, was rapid, and work poured in upon him : charm of manner, quick appreciation of character, intuitive sympathy, all helped him. He handled one or two difficult cases requiring tact with discretion and force, gradually building up a reputation for judgment and courage. Alfred was always able to call upon his fighting faculty ; he was never stronger either in games or work than when the issue seemed doubtful or desperate.

There were two cases of which he felt especially proud: in one he had to plead the cause of an old and fiery client who was going to law for his own satisfaction more than for justice. Alfred told him that he had no chance of winning his suit, but he contrived so to present the case that the old man's heart was lightened. A large piece of silver plate still testifies to the client's gratitude, which was not, he felt, sufficiently expressed by the official fee.

Lord Midleton describes the other case for this book:

One of his earliest legal experiences was in 1889, when the Parnell Special Commission was sitting, and he was briefed on behalf of a friend, who had been dragged into the case by a side issue. Mr. George Brodrick, the Warden of Merton, was a great character, and although no two people were probably so dissimilar, except in the bonhomie of their dispositions and their broad interest in humanity as such, as Alfred and the Warden, they had come together years before in Surrey, and had a great mutual regard for each other. The Warden, who had been a lifelong Liberal, and had rejected the politics of his family, had been brought up with a round turn in 1885 by the transfer of his Party to Home Rule, and led the Unionist reaction in Oxford with an incisiveness of speech which was not always palatable to his former associates. In particular, he was indignant that an Undergraduate Society, which invited men of very extreme opinions to address them, had included some of those who were being charged before the Tribunal with actual crime; and on an occasion, after the Commission had begun to sit, the Warden concluded a satirical speech on this subject by observing that 'he noticed that Mr. Dillon had recently addressed a meeting of Oxford undergraduates, and that he had no doubt that if the Whitechapel murderer could only be discovered, he also would be invited to lecture at Oxford, in the presence of a society which he could name if he thought proper.'



This outburst was naturally seized upon by the Parnellites, and the Warden was promptly cited to appear before the Commission for contempt of Court. His indignation at being placed in a position, as he phrased it, 'in which one whose business it was to rebuke others, might find himself rebuked,' was very great, and the fact that the whole subject provided the newspapers with humorous comments, or assumed indignation, according to their political atmosphere, made the incident prey upon his mind, and he was with difficulty dissuaded from appearing on his own behalf before the Tribunal, and delivering a speech in the tone of Strafford pleading for his life.

Finally, however, the Warden was induced to commit his case to Counsel in the recognised way, and he chose Alfred Lyttelton, although a junior, as one who would more nearly enter into his feelings than anybody else. When the great day came, Alfred set up the natural plea that the whole speech was humorous, that nobody supposed that the Warden meant to convey any comparison between Mr. Dillon and a criminal of the deepest dye like the Whitechapel murderer, but that the extravagance which caused the society to desire to hear a man whom only a few months before they had delighted to denounce, might cause them to go to any depths, and that the attack was not on Mr. Dillon but on the society. Alfred further hinted that Mr. Reid, Q.C. (now Lord Loreburn), who had conducted the case for Mr. Dillon, being a Scotchman, suffered unfortunately from the characteristic of his race, and could not appreciate a joke. He hoped the Tribunal would make allowances for him on that account, and would not allow their time to be further interrupted by so trivial an incident.

Lord Hannen, who presided, expressed the opinion of the Judges, that such explanations having been offered, it was not necessary for them to pursue the matter further, and Alfred received many congratulations from the crowded Court on his deft handling of what might otherwise have been a vexatious incident. The tribute paid by a leading

journal to the winning manner of the young counsel pleased him exceedingly. It was not the only time by a good many that his special advantages of bearing fortified his frankness and eloquence.

Alfred's own comment on the case was conveyed in a letter to the Warden's nephew.

BROOKS'S, ST. JAMES'S STREET,  
*January 13, 1889.*

MY DEAR OLD FRIEND,—I was right pleased to see your handwriting, for this vile autumn session has knocked you out of all sight as far as I am concerned, and now I am immersed again in work, some of which I am glad to say will be of a profitable character. I do not despair of getting old George through, though no doubt he has been indiscreet—the curious thing is that he had really considered the language that he was using and was not the least unmindful that contempt of Court was a sword which might be drawn. We have between us settled a very eloquent affidavit—quite apart from its legal qualities it is the production of a gentleman, and I think will carry conviction to Hannen's mind that at any rate no offence was intended. My fear is that the temptation to the Court to be impartial may militate against us, for certainly it is difficult to see how they can avoid dealing with O'Brien as contumacious.<sup>1</sup> . . .

In spite of the Warden's dissatisfaction at not being allowed to speak in his own defence, the real love and affection which the elder man had for the younger lasted till his death, many years later. He made a practice every few months of inviting himself to breakfast, and the meal was adorned by his elabo-

<sup>1</sup> The letter ends: 'I felt very lonely to-day—scarcely any one whom I really care for is in London, and this club is like the tomb. It is all very well for Lady Hilda to send her love—but she has consistently cut me for about six months.—Ever your affectionate  
A. L.

rate and dignified phraseology. Alfred also paid many visits to Merton College.

Sir Charles Darling writes as follows :

It is difficult to appreciate exactly Alfred Lyttelton's powers and position as a Barrister, for his career in the Courts was neither long nor continuous. On the Oxford Circuit he had a fair share of briefs in both the Crown and the Civil Courts, but there were few of those commercial cases to be had—such as used to be common on the more Northern Circuits—cases which communicate something of their own quality to those who conduct them. When he joined the Circuit, Mr. Henry Matthews, Q.C. (Lord Llandaff), was the Leader. To him the conduct of a case was a form of sport—a game of skill—fencing for intellectual exercise pure and simple, the duel *à outrance*, the stiletto not disdained if the position of the client were a bad one. Naturally, Henry Matthews, by far the most brilliant man on the Circuit, set the fashion. Alfred as a Junior watched all this with the keenest interest and enjoyment, as his comment out of Court would prove. In Court or consultation he brought to the assistance of his leaders a sound and more than sufficient knowledge of law—and he would on occasion argue a point before the Judge for the advantage of some Leader more apt in the convincing of a jury. His arguments were always good—but his manner made them seem better than they were, and it cannot be doubted that many of his contentions found readier acceptance because of the transparent fairness with which he considered those of his opponent. In him this was not artifice. Perhaps he had not the gift of distortion in the same degree as some of his fellows—for he did not consciously use it. Of some of the tricks of advocacy then often employed he certainly disapproved ; and he owed nothing to the practice of them. Although he could see a fine point as well as another, he did not, as some do, value it for its tenuity alone. The real right or wrong of it all was never altogether absent from his mind—advocate though he was. Perhaps

he was less conspicuous as a Leader through being hardly enough of a partisan—and in a silk gown his forensic success was not remarkable. As a consequence, or of choice, he was more occupied as an Arbitrator than as an Advocate—and no one can doubt that, had he refused political office, he would have excelled as a Judge.

His style had something of captivating even when his subject was unattractive. His language was often more recondite than the idea it was used to convey—and if he was not obviously fastidious in the choice of his phrases, it was evident that he had rejected some less elegant or plainly appropriate words in favour of those which he uttered. This alone—even had he been otherwise inclined to it—would have saved him from that wearisome volubility which goes by the name of eloquence among many of those whose patronage is essential to the Barrister's advancement at the Bar. His influence amongst his fellows was out of all proportion to his practice.

Yet he was at this time already making a considerable income, which increased year by year, until he finally abandoned practice at the Bar.

The holidays Alfred spent chiefly hunting, shooting and stalking, for the long confinement in Chambers and the Law Courts made him crave for the open air and the life of sport. He often went to The Glen, which he loved, and once wrote from there to St. John Brodrick :

It is very delightful here—but would be far more so if we had a little more family life and were not always on our company manners. Swain after swain comes, pays his court, sighs, goes, and sends presents, leaving us all wondering at the exhaustless energy of Margot, which continues them in due yoke and disciplined obedience.

Hilda left a trail of light at Hagley. It was very sweet of her to come. You must be there next time.—Ever your affectionate

A. LYTTELTON.

The following letter, written from Easton Grey on Christmas Day 1890, reflects some of the delight he felt in being on the back of a horse in the open air :

MY DEAREST LAVINIA,—Forgive the pencil. I took rather a heavy fall yesterday over the last fence of the day (and I don't think I ever hit the ground so hard in my life), and the result has been a considerable stiffness to-day. But we are having a delicious time. I did buy the four-year-old at Scarboro'; a lovely creature, quite thoroughbred, with all his paces like elastic and a canter as smooth as oil. But I can't hunt him at present, as he is so young he is not up to weight, and though he jumps beautifully when he likes, he is very apt to refuse, and rear, and play old Harry, if there are any thorns about. And the movements of a thoroughbred are as quick as lightning, very apt to put one down. But I have one beautiful hunter though he did fall yesterday, and one other borrowed, and so we are having a glorious time. Tommy and Charty very happy—he so well again, and enthusiastic over the hunting which has made a different man of him. . . . I have hunted six times before the Christmas holidays, and if it only will not freeze, shall get six days more before I have to go back regularly to work. I was very lonely in November. No relations—Lucy, Charles, Sybella, Meriel, all away, and no Tennants: I felt very desolate, but December has been much better, for I had lots of work, and when that comes it makes up for very much—but I had a slack time in November rather, and thought as one always does that I was going to be ruined. . . . Now I must finish. . . . My vision and memory of Leeds<sup>1</sup> are very sunny, despite all the smoke; it is quite impossible for your abode to be otherwise. Tell all of them not to let me get selfish. It is so bad for one to be alone, and well off, and in London, with the great misfortune and calamity of a lifetime

<sup>1</sup> Edward Talbot was then Vicar of Leeds.



always inspiring others to pity me, and not ask things of me.

In the very same letter he confides to Lavinia that he has just given £600 to a friend to get him out of a difficulty.

In the autumn he always went north for shooting and stalking, very often ending up with one of the choral festivals. Music was his great joy and refreshment. Nothing tempted him so much as the promise of good music, and he had friends who took him to concerts, and arranged for people to come and sing to him. Never was any one a better listener, his ready smile and warm applause, and his instinctive understanding of good music, made his praise valuable; many people felt inspired to sing or play their best when they knew his ear was within range.

Alfred went abroad several times in the holidays, but it was almost always a sense of duty, rather than pleasure, which influenced him. By nature he cared little for the joys of travelling and sight-seeing, they seemed tame to him compared with those of sport. In 1890 he went for a cruise in Lord Pembroke's yacht, the only other passengers being Lady Pembroke, Lord and Lady Ribblesdale, and Mr. Harry Cust.

'After four days of misery,' writes Alfred to his sister Lucy, 'we had eight divine days in and out of ports on the coast of Brittany in beautiful weather.' He expresses his delight in all the talk and banter that went on, his endless discussions with Harry Cust generally ending in irresistible laughter.



Charty Ribblesdale's sunny temperament and power of enjoyment kept them all on the tip-toe of interest. She was always ready for any enterprise or expedition. Alfred often described how determined she was to imitate the others in their diving and bathing exploits, and though she could hardly swim at all, took a fearless header from the deck of the yacht, trusting implicitly to the rescuing powers of her friends in the sea.

Thus he had many distractions and amusements, but he had hours also for quiet reading and thought; and though his ambitions at this time were in abeyance, and life seemed to him merely a task to be gone through with, yet below, his mind was always working; observing, commenting, learning. He watched politics with increasing interest, and had been able, though with many misgivings, to follow his uncle in the beginning of the Home Rule struggle.

The course of political events must now be briefly recorded. In 1885 Mr. Gladstone, after five years of a stormy and difficult administration, was defeated in the House on an amendment to his budget, and tendered his resignation. No definite policy for Ireland had then been pronounced by him. Lord Salisbury, after many negotiations, took office. The General Election was in November and December, and resulted in leaving the Tories in a minority, but no other party by itself had a majority. The Irish party, greatly augmented in numbers, held the balance. Negotiations had passed between Mr.

Parnell and Lord Carnarvon in the preceding session, and Mr. Gladstone felt the moment had now come for the two great parties to combine and settle the Irish question. He offered his services to the Conservative party for this purpose. But Lord Salisbury decided that he could not accept the offer.

On the 26th of January 1886 the Conservative Government was defeated, and on the 29th Mr. Gladstone, aged seventy-six, consented to take office. He then pronounced in favour of some form of Home Rule. Lord Hartington refused to join the Government; Mr. Chamberlain consented, hoping to be able to approve such final shape as the project might assume. But in March both he and Mr. Trevelyan resigned, and on the 8th of April Mr. Gladstone brought in his first Home Rule Bill.

Discussion raged fiercely over such questions as the exclusion or inclusion of the Irish Members in the Imperial Parliament, the compensation to be paid to landlords, the amount of Ireland's contribution to the Imperial Exchequer, and so on.

Alfred, writing to Mary in September 1887, comments :

I loved G. O. M.'s speech on the Jubilee, and wish enormously that he could be doing this sort of thing instead of 'bearing the burden too heavy for a man who hopes for heaven.'

He is winning all right in Home Rule, but the scheme has lost terribly in my eyes, by the loss of the purchase out of landlords, and by the continued presence of the Irish in Parliament. The first is a sacrifice which we must make, if we do not wish to do injustice, and if we hope to make

the settlement acceptable. The second gives a leverage for future intrigue by Labby and the more disreputable English Radicals.

I hear that Dicey has been writing good letters in the *Spectator* about these things, but have not seen them myself.

The Bill was defeated by the secession of Mr. Chamberlain and his group, who formed the Liberal Unionist party. Mr. Gladstone decided to appeal to the country on his policy and was defeated at the polls. It was six years before he again took office, and during that time he remained still the foremost figure in the arena.

In 1890 came the Parnell Commission and the dramatic unmasking of the forger who had sold letters purporting to come from Mr. Parnell to the *Times*. Undoubtedly the finding of the Commission, on the whole, helped Mr. Gladstone's policy, and inclined the country to view his proposals with more favour.

In 1891 Alfred might have stood for Parliament on the Liberal side, but he writes of his decision, against accepting, to Mary :

They have offered me about the best seat in the United Kingdom. It is very kind of them, and I feel very much complimented. On the whole, however, I have resolved to wait three or four years more. It gives me a pang not to be with Uncle W., but I am grievously at sea about Home Rule, and think it dreadfully difficult now, to embark in a boat without knowing definitely what course is going to be set. The scheme, it seems to me, wants more than ever to be unfolded and fully criticised.

Naturally for a man of his family, ties of affection and interest bound him to the Liberal party.

Some of his contemporaries were already Members of Parliament, but his circumstances differed from theirs. He had started life with hardly any money, and, if he was to enter politics, had to earn for himself a stable as well as a sufficient income.

In the same year he also writes :

I have read a fair lot lately, principally about socialism. The Fabian Essays which Herbert was reading at Glen impress me a great deal. The best I think are those by Shaw and Webb, Clarke and Mrs. Besant—that by Webb being I think extraordinarily clever, suggestive and temperate. Many of their principles are worked out with great ingenuity and clearness, but the dislocation of the vast and complex machinery of industry seems almost an impossibility—a dream, though in some ways rather a noble dream. I read Dicey's *The Verdict*. I think you ought to read it also, though it is in some senses bad reading for those who put their faith in the character of the Irish M.P.'s.

During these years Alfred and the writer of this book became intimate companions ; it so happened that many of his and Laura's friends were also mine, or became mine as the time went on. In October 1888, Mary Drew invited me to visit her at Hawarden, for though married she still lived at home with her parents. She was summoned to London on family business the very day I was expected, and no one in the house except Alfred even knew me by sight. I had met him before his marriage at the first dinner party I ever went to in London, aged eighteen, and had hardly seen him since, though I had been in his house several times ;—I had a girl's worship for Laura, who had

been kind and responsive. For Alfred I cultivated an awed reverence ; he seemed to me like some one set apart, and dedicated to sacred memories.

It was daunting when I arrived at the famous house, to find my one friend in the family away. However, I summoned such social courage as I possessed, and heard with relief that Alfred was a fellow-guest. He always spent two or three weeks every year at Hawarden ; he loved the atmosphere of the place and its combination of austerity and gaiety. Both Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone exercised a rigorous self-discipline, in the matter of religious observance, but there was no severity in their treatment of others, and there was constantly the chance of great talk between the master of the house and the many distinguished people who came to visit him for a day or so at a time : he was also ready to talk with the humblest ; indeed his courteous assumption that his hearer was as learned as himself was sometimes embarrassing.

Hawarden has delightful old-fashioned rooms, the long pale-green library with pillars at both ends, and great windows opening on to sloping lawns and trees ; the little drawing-room hung with uniform oval pictures of ancestors ; the large bedrooms with chintz covers and heavy mahogany furniture. All this delighted me, but I had to dress in a hurry, for I arrived late from Scotland.

When I got down every one was waiting, and almost before I could look round I was going into dinner on Mr. Gladstone's arm. This was formidable ; I had to try and return the difficult balls



which he served to me from time to time, and he took everything I said with perfect seriousness. Alfred came to the rescue; he knew exactly how to draw out his uncle. Like a skilful picador with a bull, he began, leaning forward, his eyes very serious, but his lips twitching a little:

‘Uncle William, I see Ingersoll has been sending you his pamphlet; what sort of a man is he?’ An instant response, a look of anger like a spark from the eyes, a lashing of words in a low roar:

‘Ingersoll! a most paltry, mean fellow.’

Then followed a stream of invective and descriptive scorn, till nothing was left of the wretched Ingersoll. But dinner by that time was nearly over, and an awed guest saved from entering the arena.

The next day Arthur and Kathleen Lyttelton arrived. They were an interesting couple: Arthur a strong, fastidious, reserved and yet talkative man; talkative about abstract and literary things, silent and painfully constrained about personal ones, because of a deep secret feeling so fervent and intense that it could hardly be allowed expression. Kathleen was of a very different disposition. She had a keen strong intellect to match her husband's, and a character no whit less strong than his. But she was passionate, tempestuous, and fearless in intimacy. She captured people to whom she was attracted, insisted upon mutual revelation, and then interpreted her new discovery to Arthur. He did not always take the same overwhelming interest; sometimes he did, and then a triangular friendship



was established. Once his affection had been roused, no detail about his friend's life, however trivial, bored him. To confide something to Kathleen was to be sure that in a few moments it was known to Arthur also.

They walked into the library at Hawarden these two, laughing and talking about their journey. I felt outside their circle and was sorry that my quiet intercourse with Alfred would be interrupted. But somehow, in a few hours, Kathleen and I had made friends. We sat together in Mary's sitting-room, read the fragments of Laura's diary and letters which Mary had copied out, talked of her and of all the thoughts which such a subject suggested. For Kathleen had loved her little sister-in-law: she always wore a silver crucifix round her neck that Laura had left her in the will, and surrounded the thought of her brief life with a halo of romance and pathos. I became an intimate friend of Arthur's too; one of the few to whom he spoke without reserve.

A great deal of talk went on by the library fire: Mary had a gift for stimulating discussion. One evening Alfred and I sat together in the big room alone; he did not speak of his sorrows or I of my perplexities and uncertainties, for like most girls of twenty-three I had difficult decisions to make, not unknown to him; yet the quiet hour, the low light, the flickering flame of the fire, shut us into a little place of intimacy where friendship was begun.

Among Alfred's friends was a man much older

than himself called Godfrey Webb. He was what people of a former generation would have called a wit, and often explained that for one pun he put into words there were hundreds he suppressed. But his wit was not merely verbal, he had a quick mind and a very humorous outlook, and a sympathy with all the smaller and more personal aspects of life which made him the confidant of many women. He was perhaps a minor friend, as he was a minor poet, for large ambitions were not his quarry; he liked best to interest himself in the personal squabbles and love-affairs of his friends, and the social successes of his protégées. It was one of his amusements to 'discover' people, generally girls, and introduce them into certain circles. If they succeeded he felt all the glow of a creator, if they failed he was a little apt to fail them, not in kindness but in admiration. He always declared that it was he who 'discovered' Laura Tennant; but this was a disputed claim. At any rate he loved her desperately.<sup>1</sup>

Alfred and I often met at Godfrey Webb's little dinners of which he was justly proud, cooked by

<sup>1</sup> Tennyson in 1883 had described Laura as 'half child, half woman,' and on this theme Godfrey wrote the following poem:

'Half child, half woman, wholly to be loved,  
By either name she found an easy way  
Into my heart, whose sentinels all proved  
Unfaithful to their trust. The Luckless Day  
She entered there! Prudence and Reason both!  
Did you not question her? How was it, pray,  
She so persuaded you? "Nor sleep, nor sloth,"  
They cried, "o'ercame us then: a child at play  
Went smiling past us, then turning round,  
Too late your heart to save. a woman's face we found."'

the wife of his French manservant, a familiar figure called Saubot. Saubot was often drunk. He did not always behave in great country houses with sufficient reserve, but he was forgiven because of the virtue and the talent of his wife. If Godfrey protected Saubot, most certainly Madame Saubot protected Godfrey. The material side of his dinners gave him no anxiety, and left him free to concoct mixtures of people and daring combinations of talent.

At Mells Park, too, Frances Horner's home, Alfred and I were fellow guests on many occasions. Frances when she married had found the old house solid and comfortable, containing some interesting pictures and relics, but rather dingy and neglected. She transformed it: she covered the red silk walls of the drawing-room with pictures given her by her father: left the dim browns and gold of the library wisely alone, while her personal books overflowed into the ante-rooms, passages, and the morning-room, and she made every corner a model of comfort and charm. She filled the house week after week with delightful company, for she had that spirit of enjoyment which belongs to the ideal hostess.

Alfred, as has been said, had always been one of her special friends, even before he married Laura, and he was constantly at Mells. Charty Ribblesdale, Harry Cust, Lord Pembroke, Mr. Haldane, Mr. Asquith, Godfrey Webb, Sir Arthur Godley, Sir Edward Burne-Jones, Arthur Balfour, Lord Bath, and many others came and went. I often stayed

for weeks at a time, and Mells became a second home to me.

Then there was Oakdene, Mrs. Herbert Jekyll's house in Surrey, and Selwyn College where I used to stay with Arthur and Kathleen Lyttelton. And now and then Alfred would come to my sitting-room in London. There was one occasion when, Kathleen and I sitting with him in that room, he began to talk about his own career, and his hesitations between law and politics. I expressed the silly opinion that a judge's life was a dull, uninspired one, but Alfred would not accept this. He gave a description of what a judge's life might mean, the fine balance, the patient adjustment of other men's quarrels, the great opportunities for sympathy, understanding, and influence. I tried to contrast the closed door of a judgeship with the uncertain but adventurous possibilities of political life. He walked up and down the room battling more with his own thoughts than with mine, but stimulated no doubt by his two listeners' belief in his power and capacity.

It is difficult to give an impression of his personality at this time in words, for the charm of his mere presence is hardly to be analysed. Certainly every one he met came under its influence, and responded with the best of themselves. He had a way of looking at people which showed that his mind was not occupied alone with what was being said, for his eyes betrayed a delight in the voice, appearance, expression, in the very being of his friend : a delight which it seemed as if he could not control. And then his smile would break it all up, and he would utter some little

word, almost incoherent, of affection or appreciation, and out would come his hand and be laid in a caressing manner upon his companion's arm. No one could resist his warmth, or fail to expand under his influence. His praise was unstinted and ungrudging, he kept nothing back; was there a good phrase, a fine note, a well-played piano, a clever criticism, a witty answer, all were sure of their instant meed from him. It was no wonder that people felt clever and good and alive when with him; they loved him while they revelled in a heightened appreciation of their own powers.

The following is the first letter Alfred ever wrote to me, very characteristic in its flattering exaggeration:

*7th February 1889.*

MY DEAR MISS DIDI,—I felt rather gaunt here to-night, because I had rather a nice dinner which I had to throw over and it was my birthday, which suggests melancholy reflections. But I could not have had anything more to cheer me than your little note. It is rather jolly to be missed, isn't it? and I would rather be missed by you than welcomed by most. Your life must be a veritable pool of Bethesda, and he has to be nimble who gets time to step into it, so eager are many to bathe in the waters, bright and free, and healing to those, dusty with the stripes of this rough world. Life may be infinitely sad—but it can have such rich joys; and may I wish for you as it is my birthday (and I have a kind of inverted prerogative) the best and richest of these, some such as you ray out to men, yes and to women I expect even more.

Good night.—Yours ever faithfully,

A. L.

Another in the following year may be given:

*5th January 1890 (in the train).*

MY DEAR MISS DIDI,—This is very hard, and I ought not for a moment to think of our disappointment but only



of your illness, for they say it is very uncomfortable at first indeed.<sup>1</sup> But you cannot imagine how sad we felt not to have a hope that your dear tall figure would appear at the door. I thought it so particularly good a chance, for it would have been a dinner in Mount Street without counting. I mean you might come again quite soon without it seeming too often. If only I had known I might have come to see you this morning. The Master<sup>2</sup> too was sadly discomposed. I had a long talk with Kathleen this afternoon. I never see her now without finding that she has added a faculty or a charm to her rich store. Have you anything to do with the pulling out in her of so many stops?—something perhaps, for her whole nature expands and grows rich on love. I was to have gone to Mells to-day but an aunt of Jack's died . . . and we were put off. Charty with characteristic courage telegraphed that she would go after the funeral, but it was not to be. . . . Ld. R. has improved wonderfully in health under the influence of hunting, which indeed makes me quite half my age. I shall have, with luck, 2 or 3 days more. And then my longest spell of work in the year. . . . Now bless you, my dear Miss Didi, and send you back to health. Don't think of acknowledging this horrid scrawl, scarcely coherent, but meant to convey affectionate sympathy from A. L.

During the summer we met again at Mrs. Jekyll's house in Surrey. One sunny Sunday morning we were left alone together on the lawn looking over a lovely stretch of country. Alfred had briefs, I a book, and Mrs. Jekyll went off to church, thinking to herself that we should enjoy a long talk together. But we hardly spoke at all: the briefs intimidated me; I felt I should have to be either so amusing or so intimate that he would forget them, and neither effort seemed possible. He was perhaps

<sup>1</sup> Influenza, then a new disease.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur Lyttelton, Master of Selwyn College.



grateful that I left him in peace to work in the open air ; intercourse is not always dependent upon speech. In the afternoon we all went together to the top of St. Martha's hill, where in the old pilgrim's church a service was held. The following letter refers to this visit :

127 MOUNT STREET,  
13th June 1890.

MY DEAR MISS DIDI,—You liked Bullen and here is one. Sometimes Marlowe is more classical than decorous, and I can't answer for his always writing what you must read, I am not knowing enough to lay out a safe course. But you will be able to tell.

I send it to remind you of the perfect two days ; the ideal music, the little wind-swept church St. Martha's are sunk deep in my memory. The charm of seeing you so well and happy frame them for me in gold. Bless you always and bring you the best.

In 1890 I fell ill and was ordered off to Egypt for several months. Fortunately for me Mrs. Jekyll also had to go to Egypt for the sake of her little boy, and Spencer Lyttelton, who spent a great deal of his life wandering over the world, seized the opportunity of a journey in congenial companionship.

The following letter was sent to Egypt :

DUBLIN, *December* 1890.

MY DEAR MISS DIDI,—A waiting-room, on a Sunday night, in this squalid town, brings no inspirations, but it is perhaps the easier and more delicious to project oneself out of the damp gloom into the bright East, and from this mouldy civilization to the simple and violent nations, and to hold your dear hand for a moment, and thank you for the letter which I keep a prize. Indeed, though you

have many lovers and acquaintances I am less likely than any other to forget you, for I have always thought much about you, and my affection has not needed the stimulus of presence to keep it vital. I feel so sure of being happy when I have anything like a fair chance of seeing you. . . . Is it possible that you have ever felt the better for anything I have said or done? Indeed it is wonderful, for it is absolute truth, as I have told you, that though I love goodness I am not good, full of human weakness, passions, violences, not what I might have been had the sweet and blessed companionship continued which had just begun. Forgive my writing about myself—it is not usual, only you understand. . . . We were very happy at Mells—though there was no hunting, there was a brave company, and Lyall<sup>1</sup> was charming, and I have much attachment for dear old Haldane, who carries a great deal of slow wisdom and fiery idealism under his Gallican priest-like exterior. I read out some Schopenhauer which he had translated. It was not decent, but I expurgated as I went on, and Frances and Charty roared over it. To-night, instead of dining in Pont Street<sup>2</sup> as they bade me, I am going as is my wont to Birmingham. You might write to me once again; though this is only 4 sides it is writ very small. It isn't nearly what yours was, but I am the worst of letter writers, almost as bad as I am a caller. May all bright and good and blessed things be yours in 1891 and always. A Scotch working-man striker said in a speech against long hours, 'Give us time to tell our wives they are still our sweethearts.'<sup>3</sup> It is worth hours of oratory.—Your ever faithful A. L.

My brother and I came home by Italy and joined some members of our family in Sicily. Alfred knew of this, and, being offered a trip on Mr. Alfred Farquhar's yacht, came out in the spring to Palermo. We met in the Cathedral there, but I had lost my

<sup>1</sup> Sir Alfred Lyall.    <sup>2</sup> My home.    <sup>3</sup> Said by Mr. John Burns.

voice from cold. I hurried back to the hotel and sat over a hot-water can for a good deal of the night, and on the next day was able to have speech with him. We had one, and one only chance of a talk together, and that was in the Italian twilight in a public garden with a band playing. He had received a letter from Charty which reported Sir Charles Bowen's praises of his ability and prophecy of a great career for him. Alfred was surprised, happy, encouraged ; he told his companion that he could hardly believe the praise was genuine, but how he longed to justify it. I sympathised with him perhaps a little wistfully ; by that time, having been through much unhappiness myself, I had begun to turn more and more to him in my thoughts, and to feel that there might be content for both if we came together.

On his way home, and from the *Vapore Elettrice*, on the 6th of April 1891, he wrote to me :

Yes, it rolls a good deal, but in a more leisurely manner than the yacht *Ceres*, and so I can just write a line or two, though I daresay you won't be able to, or care much, to read them. If only you were here I should not feel as I do, and that somehow I should never see you. They ought to have let me have one *tête-à-tête*, notwithstanding my well-known prejudices, and indeed if you were opposite instead of this handsome Italian, in your white hat which so animated the Palermese, I should not find it hard even till 2 or 3, and this without tapping the origin of evil ! whereas now I feel so miserable, that I can scarce say a word, under my breath, into your ear. I am not fearful of being 'drowned,' but I find life in London, whither I go, confusing and rather saddening.

'Je cherche mon pauvre moi et je ne le trouve plus.'

I only find now some one so travel stained and besmirched. I still love all things true and beautiful, but I wonder only that those with young life in them, and delicious intellectual and imaginative fields opening before them, can support me. *E possibile* that you minded the least that Palermo was short of one big ugly rough Englishman? I'm sure that it makes very little difference, though for a moment I think you were sorry to lose a faithful ally. . . . You are much too good ever to get into a row, or how I would love to get you out by strength or strategy. In your life there is no correlative of tennis, or even yet I might be of some use. But wherever I am, and whatever I am doing, count on me to do all I know for you—if ever you want anything done.—Believe me, dear Miss Didi, your affectionate

A. L.

This letter was not sent till the 19th of April, when the following postscript was added :

I never sent this because it is so illegible and incoherent, and generally indicates the saloon of a rolling steamer. So will you forgive it and its irregularity, sentimentality, and confusion. It is a poor return for the noble 8 sider. Don't think I am ever bored, or think it showing off when you give me a delicious description. . . . Middle age dines—and if I hadn't played well with Saunders yesterday (tennis) I should be in the category. Now good-night, be very happy. Bless you.



PART II





## PREFACE

I HAVE now come to a very difficult part of my task. Hitherto I have been able to write about Alfred and his life, his joys and sorrows, almost entirely from outside, though I hope with the understanding that long intimacy with him should have secured. But now I have to put myself into the picture also, as from this time onwards and to the end, Alfred's life and mine were closely interwoven.

If I have erred in discretion, I would ask the readers of this book to keep in mind one or two considerations. Alfred's unique position among his contemporaries was due not so much to gifts of intellect as to gifts of character. His life was not full of adventure, nor, if measured by some standards, even of achievement. What he was, rather than what he did, needs to be portrayed. In trying to draw the picture of a man's character, his affections must be described, and as truthfully as possible.

If Alfred's second marriage had been merely the patching up of a broken life, the task of his biographer would have been in a conventional sense far easier. But the truth is that Alfred was able to love again passionately and deeply, and for twenty years lived in a companionship that was

ardent, intimate, and intensely happy, unclouded by estrangement or weakened by custom. The conventional idea that a man with an experience such as Alfred's behind him could never love again, would be as untrue in his case as the equally conventional deduction, that when he did love again, he had forgotten or changed.

Because the truth about this new relationship is vital to the comprehension of Alfred's being, it is treated here with an absence of reserve which may seem unsensitive.

## CHAPTER I

### BORDIGHERA

1892

It is a matter of experience that in our moments of deep emotion, transitory though they be, we plunge deeper into the reality of things than we can hope to do in hours of the most brilliant argument. At the touch of passion doors fly open which logic has battered on in vain: for passion rouses to activity not merely the mind but the whole vitality of man. It is the poet, the lover, the mourner, the convict, who shares for a moment the mystic privilege of uplifting that Veil of Isis which science handles so helplessly, leaving only her dirty finger-marks behind.—*Mysticism.*

IN February 1892, though better than in the preceding year, I was again ordered abroad: I was once more to join Mrs. Herbert Jekyll and her little son, who were settled at Bordighera. The whole of that winter Alfred and I hardly met, and it seemed as if a blight had fallen upon the growth of our friendship. Some of the blame was his and some was mine. I held back from love, and so perhaps did he. I felt that our marriage should only spring from complete certainty, and not from sudden impulse or surprised emotion.

In the first days when I knew him well, I hoped that Alfred would never marry again, having romantic notions of what fidelity should be. But later, as knowledge of life developed, the conception of faithfulness altered, and I began to understand that Alfred might need me.

I had a feeling about him which seemed deeper

than love, a conviction that nothing he or I did could really keep us apart. For many years I had known that I should marry him; even while my heart was turned another way. It was not a premonition so much as a subconscious piece of knowledge, far clearer to me than to him. We are perhaps all governed by influences from some other plane of existence, though we are not all aware of the fact. This is not the place to tell an inner history—it has been written down elsewhere.

At last, on the 21st of February 1892, we understood each other, and realised that we had touched the fringe of a great happiness. He knew quite well that I could never desire to displace the past, and that I should include in my love for him, a love of that which was part of him.

It was arranged that after a fortnight I should still go to Bordighera and gather strength in the sun, and that he should come out at Easter and marry me. It was strange—just because it had come about so naturally—that I should go to the identical place where Laura also spent a few weeks before her marriage. I had read extracts from one or two of Laura's letters, the very same that are quoted in this book, and my thoughts at Bordighera were at least as full of Laura as they were of Alfred.

The following are extracts from letters he wrote to me at this time :

ALTHORP,

NORTHAMPTON, *27th March 1892.*

. . . Yesterday I sent back a Brief and came here. I had had a headache for about five days, and I thought if

I did not get a little air I should crack up and be no good for my heart's love. And so we had by noble luck the finest hunt of the season, and everybody fell almost except me, and I felt as if I had a charmed life, because the thought of you fell in with the glory of the bounding grass and the rush of cold air past one's ears and the smell of the red earth as it was torn up by the flashing hoofs. I did funk one place because of you. . . .

I should like you to come here once to see the marvellous library and the Sir Joshuas. . . . Lord Spencer told me that Gladstone has been to about four lawyers, who have been perfidious enough to tell him that to go into Parliament would do me no harm at all professionally, and he has therefore sent for me, having, I am further told, actually fixed my constituency. I shall have a very bad half hour with him, for I really cannot do what he wishes for three or four years, if then.

Would you mind if you never saw me except for a breathless ten minutes? I do feel so exhausted. . . . Will it really be in three weeks that I see you? Get strong . . . let every ray of sun be full of blessings for you.

127 MOUNT ST., 5/4/92.

. . . Here it is in the morning, with the sun streaming into my room, so fine and buoyant that it is impossible to go to work without saying Good Morning to you, and telling you how all sweet and bright things remind me of you and the delicious spirits which lie behind the wistful longings. . . . Will she always keep a little nonsense in her and never be quite sensible? . . .

BIRMINGHAM, 17th April 1892.

. . . Do you remember my ever writing from here before? I think I did once or twice. It is vastly more natural to write now than as I did then. . . . For indeed to think of you now in this golden weather makes my whole heart expand. . . . I am writing under great difficulties in Court, and there is a man waving pictures about my head



while he is addressing the jury in an impassioned manner. But I hope none the less that I am more grammatical than he is.

Spencer went out with Alfred about the 20th of April for our wedding on the 24th. Arthur could not leave England, but Kathleen and Sybella were there ; also my parents, sister, and brothers, and one or two friends. Kathleen, who had ardently desired this marriage, felt suddenly bewildered and uneasy. Bordighera seemed full of Laura ; she could not reconcile her conflicting affections. She said nothing, but her emotions, always highly keyed, made it impossible for her to conceal her trouble. I divined it easily : I had indeed once been through something of the same perplexity myself, and had written a few lines which I kept in my Bible, an attempt at the expression of my feeling. The night before the wedding I put this paper in an envelope and sent it to Kathleen, asking to have it returned.

Kathleen sent the following little note :

*Good Friday.*

I must write, for I know I cannot speak the words I want to say. I thank you with all the strength of my heart for writing. Yesterday . . . I could feel only a longing for her, and a realisation of her presence in the Church, and it seemed like disloyalty to you, yet it was hopeless to try and reconcile the two feelings. I knew that no one but you could do it, and I should have told you. But I prayed about it constantly. . . . I will give you back the paper ; you will let me keep it a little longer. But I shall be happy now. Thank you, thank you.

K.

On Easter day Alfred and I went together to the service George Macdonald always held in his own house on Sunday evenings, and which Laura had also joined in. He told me he should say something specially for Alfred and for me, and so his spoken thoughts were all upon the resurrection of life, and love, and happiness, over and over again, here and hereafter.

On Easter Monday we were married in the little English church at Bordighera, George Macdonald, wrapped in a huge plaid, sitting in the choir, Mrs. Macdonald playing the organ.

Afterwards, when I ran upstairs in my wedding gown to get ready for the journey to Varese, I was met by some one staying in the hotel, whom I knew slightly, a woman who had lately lost her husband.

‘I have been happy too,’ she said, ‘and I wish you every——,’ and then she could not finish for tears. My heart stopped—here was one story ended, and another begun ; was this to be my fate also? I stumbled on, brushed the thought away, and started into the happy life which was to be mine for twenty years.

## CHAPTER II

### TWO YEARS

1892-1894

Hopeful, sanguine, nay he did not even *seem* to need definite hope, or much to form any ; projecting himself in aerial pulses like an aurora borealis, like a summer dawn, and filling all the world with present brightness for himself and others.—  
*Carlyle's Life of Sterling.*

ALFRED was popular with all sorts and kinds of people—lawyers, sportsmen, hunting men, cricketers, golfers, politicians ; socially there has perhaps never been any one more widely loved by both men and women. His broad flowing sympathy carried him into touch with every one ; of course he loved the young and beautiful—the fairies as he always called them—but he had room for the middle-aged and the old, and the hospitality of his heart was unstinted.

In the first year of our marriage he took me from country house to country house for nearly three months, staying about a week at each place. I was amused and interested by it all, though the perpetual readjustment to meet the new atmosphere of every fresh family was tiring. But I made many friends, not the least among them Laura's three sisters, who welcomed me with characteristic generosity and warmth of heart. Charty from the beginning had been loving and completely unselfish ; it was not an easy task, for Alfred was her greatest friend ; he had turned to her for sympathy and help in the dark days



*Photo: Barraud*

ALFRED IN WIG AND GOWN 1892



after Laura's death, and ever since she had been closer to him than any one. However much she may have imagined that she wished her brother-in-law to marry again, and indeed her letters show that she urged him to do so, the fact when it came about was a great shock to her. She knew that the friendship would continue, but she knew too that all the little things she had been able to do for him would be done by some one else, and that inevitably their lives could not any longer be so closely interwoven. Of all this she made no secret to me; she poured out her sense of loss, and her desire to love and help the new home.

Among other visits was one to Whittingehame, Arthur Balfour's home, where the members of the family were not strangers to me, and where I felt in a very few hours at ease and happy. Alfred went over to North Berwick with his host to play golf, and sent back a letter to say he was staying away for the night.

The drive over here was a great success, and A. J. B. told me lots of things and in a quite animated way. Every moment that one is alone with him, he shows the powerful unprejudiced manner in which his mind works on not the new but the ordinary tracks. This is such a true test, I think, of a man of great ability. One sees it in Sidgwick. . . .

I loved your letter to Margot and hers to you. Both of them contain very delicate and beautiful expressions of to me the almost unexpressible. I knew quite two years ago, from a look in your eyes, that you felt what you said to her, and the feeling is one of the corner stones on which the fabric of my happiness with you is built.

A year before our marriage Alfred had bought a



house in Green Street—No. 4—as a speculation, and after struggles on my part to find something I liked better, we decided to live in it.

When we got back to London for the winter, Alfred took pains to make me understand the details of his legal work : it helped him to talk over his cases, and I was eager to hear. He rarely got home till long past seven, had to work at night from 9.30 to 12, and was often called early in the morning and worked in bed. He was already so successful at the Bar that it was obvious, even if he never became a Judge, that he would in time make a great deal of money, and neither of these prospects seemed alluring enough to be worth the strain he was putting on himself. We hankered after a life with some risk and struggle if not adventure about it.

The General Election of 1892 had brought Mr. Gladstone back to power with a diminished majority. But he at once set to work on his second Home Rule Bill. The great difficulty was the Irish representation at Westminster. Alfred's doubts as to whether he could conscientiously stand for Parliament in the Liberal interest were taking definite shape in his mind.

The following letter to Lavinia gives his impression of the Home Rule Bill of 1893 :

4 GREEN STREET,  
PARK LANE, 29/2/93.

Since I wrote that hurried line many things have happened here. I heard the Home Rule Bill brought in, and was pathetically struck by the great difference between what I

remember of his astonishing vigour and the solemn, un-jubilant, rather weary presentation of the subject. But when every criticism was made, I felt the skill with which so narrow a surface for comment was presented—and the seriousness of it all. If any one else in the whole House had tried it, there would have been laughter such as burst from the Tory benches when Lord J. Russell read out in 1832 the names of the boroughs disfranchised; or to take a smaller case when A. J. B. introduced the Irish Local Government Bill. I was very sorry for poor X—that little speech of Mr. G.'s which, read only as excellent sarcasm, was delivered in a manner truly awful, and every one felt that a butterfly had been broken on the wheel. Asquith, however, said that castigation ought always to be administered with like vigour when gross charges are made without evidence. And there is justice if not humanity in this view.

Then after writing about a lawsuit he was engaged in, he continues :

Well, Saturday, feeling that I deserved it, I had a hunt in Leicestershire, and fell in for the most glorious run of my life, forty-five minutes over the cream of the Great Quorn country, wattle fences, and unceasing grass, and the finest hounds in the world,—never lifted or spoken to, or touched for the whole time. Huntsman and field riding for life to keep up with them. Ah, we shall never see the like of it again. I wish you had been there.

Our first child—a boy—was born on the 15th of March 1893. I had been confident, but a great dread was lifted from Alfred's heart. We had tacitly agreed not to speak of these things till the danger was passed, and when all had gone well Alfred was overflowing with happiness and desire for sympathy. He went round to Bryanston Square at once, and made Sybella go with him to St. Paul's: he met a

friend in the hall and embraced her, much to her surprise, and it is believed gratification.

He wrote from Reading :

READING, 9th April 1893.

. . . I got a break of an hour or so here at an opportune moment for writing to you. Where has your letter gone ? I haven't got one yet, and I long to know how you are getting on. . . . I found some friends at Malvern to play golf with, and loved having the evenings alone to read without any disturbance whatever. What is really ideal is to get some one to dine and then to go off to the book. In the night one could stroll about without any coat on (think of me even), and look at the stars and the splendid dark outline of the hill. . . . I could not have done this even for two days before you came into my life. . . . I had not enough peace of mind or inward joys to venture to be alone if I could help it, and I hail the power of liking being alone again, as evidence and warranty of that which your presence and the sense of your love surrounds me.

You must, I think, read Mr. G.'s speech and Birrell's last night. Mr. G. really made his speech fresh, and infused into it some history and philosophy, not outworn, and every word of Birrell's is intensely characteristic. I like 'the interesting but not colossal personality' of Arthur Balfour, but there are many other sayings good and witty, and throughout a masculine ring.

Do you dream rather endless dreams about Oliver ? I think far more of him than I believed possible. I begin to hope that he will make middle age interesting, and almost romantic. You must try nevertheless to keep some picture of me, for him, in your mind of the days when I am young and keen, and with the sense of pleasure in me. But try and make him like your dear self. . . .

Here follows a catalogue of my qualities as they appeared to him, which need not be quoted. I wrote back :

I am so glad you think about Oliver ; of course I dream about him and wonder, and feel confident one minute and terrified the next. You must not ask me to keep a picture of you young and keen for him—though I shall always have one—you must keep young and keen for him yourself. Don't look upon middle age as the beginning of decay or dull apathy—it's so pagan. Why, it's the time to use all you have learned, it's the time to lift the spade you have been slowly pressing into the ground. Your keenness and your pleasure power are a matter of temperament not years, they have only got to grow and develop in the right way—not die.

I did read Mr. G.'s speech, not Birrell's, but I will. Auntie Pussy (Mrs. Gladstone) came to see me yesterday—she was quite delicious, as young as a kitten, and if you could have seen her kneel down by the cradle to look at Oliver, and then heard the tone of her voice as she said over and over again, 'Oh my sweet, my sweet, my little sweet,' you would have had your eyes full.

I went to Scotland in August, and left the baby there with my parents. Alfred wrote :

HAGLEY, *6th August 1893.*

I got here late yesterday to find dear old Lucy besides Charles and Mary, an immense break. It makes me long that you were here even more than usual, because Lucy has that memory born of imagination—so delightful to find in any one who has the real sentiment of a place in her, and who remembers about every incident of the past. Except Eton, which is almost more full of memories, no place can ever be quite like this. Here the first, as it seemed, overpowering grief when May died, followed the next year by the tragedy which for a time eclipsed the sunshine of all the associations gathered round my father ; these alone were such epoch-making events, that they stand right out from all the delights of boyish days here. And yet now they have not any bitterness connected

with them. What an incomparable difference you have made. How wonderfully you have poured your personality into every creek and nitch of my life. Your sympathy, your passionate affection, your wisdom . . . these may make me better as indeed they daily make me happier. I cannot get on many more days without you. . . . And so you will come, won't you, on Friday by the 12.50 from Glasgow. . . .

It was during the visits of that autumn that Alfred, in the intervals of deer-stalking on a forest rented that year by Lord Dudley, wrote an article for the *National Review*, of which Leo Maxse had just become the editor, called 'Is Golf a First-class Game?' He was a recent convert himself, and as enthusiastic as any one, but it amused him to examine the question seriously and to sum up against the accused. He opened the article with these words :

'We were doing very well,' said the secretary of a tennis and racquet club in the Midlands, 'till this d——d Scotch croquet came.' But come it has, greeted by salvoes of elderly enthusiasm. . . .

And he continues :

Let me disarm criticism at the outset by admitting that the mood of one who has felt the thrill of an off-drive, and of making chase better than half a yard, who recollects the emotion of a volley half an inch above the line and the wild excitement of a run-down goal, cannot be readily attuned to that of one who has known no higher joys than those of curling.

He lays down the qualities which constitute a first-class game, and among them the vigorous and graceful employment of the highest bodily activities.

But an athletic headmaster, with strong views on sanita-

tion, was heard murmuring to himself after two rounds of golf, 'This game exasperates the temper and does not open the pores.' We labour this subject. It is surely enough to say that golf can be effectively played by a man of seventy.

An animated correspondence was the result. Arthur Balfour took up the challenge when we went to Whittingehame, and after vocal discussion wrote a letter to the *Review* in defence of his favourite game, ridiculing the idea that it was easy and need not be learned till middle age.

These are very singular delusions. The violin can be played for the full term of man's natural life, but it can only be learned to perfection by those who have great natural aptitude, and who make the best of this aptitude early in life. So it is with golf. It is better to have a late conversion than to remain unregenerate. But if the most distinguished cricketer or racquet player defers, till age begins to steal upon him, the hour of reform, because in the pride of his youth he perceives that men old enough to be his father are playing golf with distinction, he will, to his irremediable regret, find himself surpassed through life by men to whom, if success depended on natural endowments alone, he should be able to give a stroke a hole. . . .

Golfers at St. Andrews and other places attacked Alfred vigorously. He wrote to me from Nairn (where he was staying with Alfred Lawrence<sup>1</sup> and his wife), and where he met Leo Maxse.

I had a divine time with Kitty (Mrs. Maxse) yesterday. She had dined the night before, and I played accompaniments with great delight to myself. Yesterday I went there, and we had about half an hour fiddling, and then for fully an hour she played splendidly on the pianoforte, with rare grasp and delightful accuracy. Touch bright

<sup>1</sup> The Hon. Mr. Justice Lawrence.



and with masculine firmness and absolute identity of hands . . . a scholarly justice about the whole thing . . . in contrast to the prolonged rallentandos one sometimes hears ; it was exactly like the North-west wind which swept the mists out of those black corries and showed us the sun. . . . Kitty thinks the article extraordinarily amusing, considering that it is on a game. It is great fun to have doubled the space of review of all the rest put together. I miss you every minute of the day in which I am not on the links.

It was in this year also that Alfred, strongly moved by an account of the court-martial on the loss of the *Victoria*, wrote the little paper which follows. Captain Bourke gave his evidence with manly simplicity, and without any attempt at self-justification. Alfred often afterwards told the story of how, when Bourke was asked if it did not occur to him that the order given was 'dangerous,' he had said only, 'No, sir.'

The fight in the House of Commons, when sober M.P.'s grappled with each other, was reported on the same day. We were spending Sunday at Panshanger with Lord and Lady Cowper, and Alfred felt impelled to write an impression of the contrast of these two events. He dictated it to me walking up and down the room, excited and emotional. In the end it seemed to him that no part of his real feeling had been expressed, and that it was not worth sending to the paper. But I insisted, and the other day, to my great pleasure, it was copied out for me by a friend whose appreciation and praise Alfred would have valued almost above any one's.

I give it here, even though Alfred was right, and that it does not completely express his characteristic exaltation at the splendour of other men's deeds.

1893.

On Friday the news of the morning exhibited two pictures . . . one humiliating, the other glorious to Englishmen. For on that day were given details of the brawl in the House of Commons, and of the conclusion of the Court-martial on the loss of the *Victoria*. It was then seen how men trained to deliberate had fought, and men trained to fight had deliberated. Orators had rushed into furious combat, sailors had gathered into sedate and impressive council. Never have been seen in sharper contrast the manners and bearing of men of words with those of men of action. It would, indeed, be unfair to regard the events of Thursday as typical of the House of Commons. Probably no assembly, excepting one composed of Englishmen, could have tolerated in its midst, with almost unbroken patience, a body of Irishmen who were selected to make existence in the House of Commons a burden to English members, and have justified their selection every day; for, with all their faults, Englishmen indeed are patient, fair, and chivalrous to small and brave minorities. And if, on the one hand, the Irish are, and mean to be exasperating in this controversy, on the other, Mr. Chamberlain has bent the whole force of a cold, fierce, and strong mind to arouse the passions of his opponents. But, when this has been said, no countryman of Pitt, Canning, or Peel can ever remember Thursday night without bitter shame. To the outward eye grotesque, these men with tall hats and frock coats ludicrously struggling together; to the inward eye melancholy, for the moral vesture of habit and civilisation, the painful acquisition of centuries of control, had slipped from their shoulders and momentarily revealed the passion of the savage. 'Was not every soul . . . of these Guardians of our Liberties naked . . . or nearly so—last night?'

The pain of this scene, in the jaded air of Westminster so suggestive of decadence, could scarcely have been allayed ; but we were able to turn the newspaper and in a moment find before us, with hardly one word of comment, the story of the loss of the *Victoria*, simply told by a sailor, under the blue Mediterranean sky. The overwhelming pathos of the event, the unnumbered deaths of the young and brave, the utter blotting out of sight and existence in ten short minutes of the vast ship and her huge and complex burdens ; the unaccountable mistake of the great Admiral ; the noble unselfishness, sedateness, and ordered strength of young and old in the awful presence of unattended death, can never be forgotten. Deeply impressive also was the Court-martial. The courteous but stern and unflinching interrogatory of the Court ; the brevity, good sense, and veracity of the answers, made the proceedings memorable to those who would wish all justice to be prompt, fair, and inflexible. There also was the defence of the Captain. His reputation, his professional life, his position before the nation were at stake. Read his speech, and you will find that at this supreme moment his own fate scarcely concerns him, his own justification is scarcely made, the manly and unadorned eloquence of deep emotion is devoted almost wholly to the deeds of others and to the defence and glory of the dead. The President of the Court handed him back his sword. Let us take comfort. Englishmen, and Irishmen too—for Captain Bourke is Irish—may read the news of Friday, and may yet think proudly of their country.

Vain, mightiest fleets of iron famed,  
Vain those all-shattering guns,  
Unless proud England keep, untamed,  
The strong heart of her sons.

ALFRED LYTTTELTON.

One more letter shall be given here belonging to the next year :

HAGLEY HALL, STOURBRIDGE,  
*5th August 1894.*

I missed you dreadfully in church, which was very peaceful with the dear old excellent Gibbs preaching as usual beautifully. And I suppose no place in the world is quite so full of associations as is the old church where almost all the resolutions of my life have been made. . . .

There too came to us all, through Uncle Billy and my father, and to me through Lucy, our first ideas of Christianity. And it was our rare fortune to see it always unallied with bigotry and gloom or narrowness, but free and joyous and raising laughter as well as tears. I thought you might perhaps be at Mells at Communion, and prayed for you, . . . and thanked God that He had given you to me. . . . 'Mercifully ordain that we may grow aged together,' and that no infirmity in our immortal part may come : above all that your aspirations be not dimmed or marred by your association with a lawyer, so much soiled with the dust of this world.

In 1893 Alfred had been made Recorder of Hereford, and in 1894 Mr. Asquith, then Home Secretary, offered him the Recordership of Oxford. This connection with the University was a great pleasure to him and added to the interest of his profession. But the call of politics was becoming more and more insistent.

Sir Charles Bowen took me for a walk in the country one winter day, and talked to me with great seriousness about Alfred's future. The brilliant and witty judge, as has been already said, had a high opinion of Alfred's ability. But he placed a political career so far above a legal one, in usefulness and interest, that he adjured me to use all my influence to persuade Alfred not to put off entering

Parliament any longer. It was the great regret of his own life, so he told me, that year by year he had delayed, thinking he would earn just a little more money. Imperceptibly the time slipped by, till he realised that it was too late for him to start on a new career and he became a judge instead. He probably exaggerated the claim of the one life against the other, but everything he said confirmed me in my ambitions. The advice was repeated to Alfred and helped to urge him to decision.

In March 1894 Mr. Gladstone resigned office some two months after the rejection of his Home Rule Bill by the House of Lords. Alfred had always felt reluctant to differ from his loved and honoured uncle even in private, and had so far refrained from taking any definite step towards entering Parliament, feeling that he could not stand wholeheartedly as a Liberal, and did not wish while Mr. Gladstone was still in public life to join a party in opposition to him. The way was now open, but before taking any irrevocable step I pleaded for a trip to Italy; I had never been farther than Venice, and longed to visit Florence. To do myself justice, I did not in the least realise the sacrifice I was asking of Alfred. He bargained for a month of Scotland first, and, when the time came, almost concealed from me his despair at leaving the moors for a hot Italian journey. Mine was the temerity of ignorance. I had planned wonderful sunny days in Florence: Alfred and I together studying the pictures and the buildings; reading history in the evenings; now and then

basking under olive-trees, with the Arno winding its way towards distant blue hills. But alas for my dreams. For ten successive days in Florence did it pour with rain. The Arno was a turbid muddy yellow. We slopped along under umbrellas to the galleries, where Alfred conscientiously looked at the pictures and read from a 'catalogue raisonné.' But his appreciation was prescribed, as Carlyle said of Sterling, also in Italy, not 'by nature and her verities, but by a century expecting every man to do his duty.' I slowly realised that he was horribly unequivocally bored ; my conscience was sensitive : I could have prayed for a golf links to be let down from heaven at his feet, and at last was reduced to tears by his valiant pretence of enjoyment and the pitiless downpour of rain.

The whole month, however, was not a failure. As we steamed out of Florence on our way to Perugia, Siena, and Orvieto the mists lifted : we ran into glorious sunlight, and some of my dream came true.



## CHAPTER III

### HAWARDEN

1894

A shepherd of the people, some small Agamemnon after his sort, doing what little sovereignty and guidance he can in his day and generation, such every gifted soul longs and should long to be.—Carlyle's *Life of Sterling*.

ALFRED'S decision to enter Parliament brought certain anxieties into being; the first and most important was financial: but there was also the necessary break with the family tradition, and the doubt whether his health would be equal to this fresh strain. The greater part of his income came from his work at the Parliamentary Bar, and no member of Parliament is allowed to practise at it. The whole of his earnings there would have to be sacrificed, and I advised a move into a cheaper house, and undertook to cultivate economy. I was buoyed up by a secret belief that he would succeed equally well in general practice at the Bar and gradually replace the income he would have to forfeit.

Before making any final arrangement Alfred had to tell his uncle and his family generally of his change of view, and of his determination to join the Liberal-Unionist wing of the Unionist party.

An invitation came to spend part of the Christmas holiday of 1894 at Hawarden; I thought this a good opportunity and urged acceptance on Alfred, who

rather unwillingly resolved to confess in person. This advice was not very wise, though at the moment it seemed a courageous and straight course. The feeling aroused in Mr. Gladstone's family by Alfred's defection was a mixture of amazement and indignation: the deed was looked upon as a personal treachery, an opinion which at least testified to the love and reverence in which his sons and daughters held their father. I was made responsible and blamed quite frankly, just as a little later I was thanked by a prominent member of the Unionist party for having secured Alfred. The truth was that I had nothing whatever to do with the change in his opinions, my only desire being that if he had to leave his party he should join the Liberal Unionists, for I cherished the hope that a day of reunion might dawn.

The interview with Mr. Gladstone himself was formidable. Alfred had asked for a few minutes of the great man's time, and was told to come to the Temple of Peace—the well-known study lined with books from floor to ceiling. He stated his misgivings, no doubt with expressions of deference, and when advice and counsel were given had to explain that his decision was irrevocable. Mr. Gladstone was quite unprepared for the revolt of his nephew, and he was very angry. Alfred felt it impossible to enter on a long argumentative discussion with the greatest debater of his time, and had to listen to some scathing severities which ended, 'Well, you are not the first man who has changed his opinion on insufficient ground,' and a dismissal.

He was miserable: he felt he was to blame, and that he should have conveyed his resolve by letter, and so spared his uncle a painful interview; but he was angered by the attitude of his cousins, who could hardly be more severe if he had been caught putting poison in Mr. Gladstone's tea-cup.

He came to my room—I had retreated there discomfited—and walked up and down, unhappy and irritated, but unrepentant. 'We must go away at once,' he said. But behind all the disapproval was so much real love and loyalty that he and I both felt an effort must be made, and gloomily joined some of the family, who were discussing the situation in an upstairs sitting-room. Alfred then announced that he meant to go away at once, but Herbert reiterated, 'You mustn't do that—you mustn't go away.' We were all sitting and standing round the fire, embarrassed and annoyed, when a footman came in with a note on a salver which he ceremoniously handed to Alfred. It was a letter from Mr. Gladstone, now unfortunately lost, but the impression it made was never forgotten. Mr. Gladstone regretted his own irritation and declared that nothing could ever make any difference in the relation between himself and his nephew. The whole controversy was immediately lifted on to a different level, for the great man himself had suppressed his personal feelings and promised undimmed affection. Alfred showed the letter to Herbert and the others, and no more was said about going away.

Mrs. Gladstone took the affair in a different way.

When she realised that Alfred would not have stood for Parliament while her husband was still in public life, she at once put the whole blame on his retirement and forgave her nephew as she would a child who had been misled. She took me a long drive through the woods in her little pony carriage, and was generous and sympathetic as ever.

The worst was now over : the essential nobility of the 'Great People,' as they were called by the family, had overcome an inevitable disapproval and disagreement, and the rest followed their example. But Alfred suffered considerably over the episode ; his affection for his aunt made him wince at the idea that he might have wounded her as well as the uncle whom he revered. Ever since her sister's death Mrs. Gladstone had looked upon the children left behind as her own, and Alfred had of course responded to her affection and influence. She had a rare nature, perhaps not fully known or understood by those outside her immediate circle. They saw only her unconventionality, her impulsiveness, her disregard of appearances, and did not realise that her unselfconsciousness, made everything, eating, dressing, driving, a means to an end,—the end possessed her. But few can have missed her humour, sometimes that of a mischievous child, sometimes of a wise and tender woman. She once talked to me about the past and the romance of her own great love-affair, crowned by a perfect married life. She spoke, too, of George Lyttelton coming to Berkeley Square to propose to her sister, Mary Glynne, Catherine herself being

already engaged to Lord Lyttelton's greatest friend, Mr. Gladstone. Lord Lyttelton was very much in love and not sure if his affections were returned, so that when Mary accepted him he was overwhelmed by his emotion. He stumbled down the stairs hardly seeing where he went ; Mr. Gladstone was on the landing, realised what had happened, drew him into the boudoir, and to calm him made him kneel down and thank God for his happiness then and there.

The friendship between Mr. Gladstone and Lord Lyttelton was only deepened by the devoted affection for one another of the two sisters they had married. They were in the habit of exchanging visits to the respective country homes, attended by all their children. As time went on this made a formidable party ; but the cousins looked upon each other as brothers and sisters, and some of Alfred's happiest memories of childhood centred round Hawarden and the influence of Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone.

It would indeed have been grievous if mere politics had disturbed such a happy relationship.

## CHAPTER IV

### WARWICK AND LEAMINGTON

1895-1897

Then to the world let shine your light,  
Children in play, be lions in fight,  
And match with red immortal deeds  
The victory that made ring the meads.

Or by firm wisdom save your land  
From giddy head or grasping hand :  
IMPROVE THE BEST ; so shall your sons  
Better what ye have bettered once.

*Founders' Day*, by ROBERT BRIDGES.

IN 1895 Mr. Peel was given a peerage on resigning the Speakership, thus creating a vacancy in the Parliamentary representation of the boroughs of Warwick and Leamington. Mr. George Peel, the Speaker's son, was nominated as a Conservative, but the Speaker had been a Liberal who followed Mr. Chamberlain when he revolted against the Home Rule policy. The seat technically therefore belonged to the Liberal Unionists, and a storm of protest and indignation was roused by a so-called attempt to capture the seat for the Conservatives. It is hardly too much to say that the stability of the political alliance between the Tories and the dissentient Liberals depended upon an adjustment of this dispute. As a matter of fact there were very few Liberal Unionists in the borough, and it was therefore vital to secure a Liberal-Unionist candidate who for personal reasons would be accept-



able to the Conservatives in the place. Alfred was selected, and after consultation with Arthur Balfour he decided to go down to Leamington and do his best.

The state of affairs in the boroughs was not happy, and everything depended upon the impression Alfred could make at the first meeting. He was very diffident about the ordeal; legal speeches in the confined atmosphere of a law-court are not perhaps the best preparation for facing a large public audience. That his personal ascendancy and charm might prove quite powerless before an organised hostility was carefully explained to me by various people, but I was confident he would succeed. His first speech was enthusiastically received; he won the support of all the malcontents, even that of Sir Montague, then Mr. Nelson, who for years had wished to stand as a Conservative for Warwick and Leamington, who had strong local and party claims, and now found himself, owing to the arrangements of the leaders, debarred from offering himself.

The fight was a stiff one, waged chiefly round the Irish question, but Alfred was returned by a good majority.

Lord Rosebery succeeded Mr. Gladstone as Prime Minister in February 1894, and on the 21st of June 1895, having lost several bye-elections—Leamington among them—his Government was defeated in a division in the House of Commons.

The General Election took place in July, but Alfred's seat, owing to the recent change, was not

contested, and he was therefore free to travel about the country speaking for various members of the party.

The result of the election was a great victory for the Conservatives and Liberal Unionists—Mr. Gladstone's last majority of 40 was converted into a Unionist majority of 152. The Liberal-Unionist leaders took office: Lord Salisbury was Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, the Duke of Devonshire became Lord President of the Council; Mr. Chamberlain, Colonial Secretary; Mr. Balfour, First Lord of the Treasury. Sir Henry James was also a member of the Cabinet, and some of the minor posts were held by Liberal Unionists. This alliance during the next seven years initiated and assisted many important and far-reaching developments. The great advance in Imperial unity and sentiment was mainly due to the manner in which Mr. Chamberlain, heartily supported by his colleagues, handled the various opportunities that presented themselves: the Queen's Jubilee in 1897, the Colonial Conferences of 1897 and 1902, and the Boer War.

On the 1st of July 1895 our second child was born, this time a daughter, christened Mary Frances after Alfred's mother and Frances Horner the god-mother.

True to the plan of living in a simpler way, the Green Street house in which we lived till 1895 had been sold, and a delightful old panelled house taken in Great College Street, Westminster, within reach of the division bell in the House of Commons.

I had found it during the winter ; I saw it on a map in the Ecclesiastical Commissioners' office, drove straight to it and knocked at the door. I happened to knock at an opportune moment, for the tenant was in want of money, and ready to sell the remainder of his lease. Alfred was taken to see it ; the whole house was in a dilapidated state, the panelled walls covered with paper, and a fretwork Moorish arch divided the one large long room. At the back of the house was a garden with a lime-tree ; in front, the windows looked over the Abbey Garden and its fine trees, topped first by the Jewel Tower of Richard II. and then, far above every other building, the Victoria Tower flying the Union Jack. Alfred was enchanted, bought the house at once, and lived in it all the rest of his life. His sitting-room had a large window built out into the garden ; it was sunny and absolutely quiet, and there he wrote and read.

The nearness to the House of Commons made it easy for Alfred to bring people home to dinner, and many interesting talks took place in the little dining-room. He did not confine his friendships to his own party, he brought back members of all the groups. Among those who used to come were, first and foremost, Arthur Balfour, George Wyndham, Lord Percy, St. John Brodrick, and Lord Robert Cecil, all intimate friends. But Mr. Asquith, Mr. Haldane, Mr. John Morley were among those who would sometimes sit round the table for an hour or so until they had to walk back to the House. Occasionally Mr. John Burns came, and



ALFRED'S LIBRARY IN GREAT COLLEGE STREET



Mr. Henry Vivian and Mr. William Jones, and many others who, however opposed they might be politically to their host, enjoyed the easy intercourse and rarely failed to come under the influence of his charm and his character.

The subjects in which Alfred took a special interest were the Workman's Compensation Act in 1897, and the Factory and Workshop Act in 1901, and most of all in the various attempts to deal with the great educational controversy raging over the denominational elementary schools. These schools were partly supported by grants from the Treasury, and partly by voluntary subscriptions and the proceeds of old bequests. They were in distress owing to the impossibility of private subscriptions meeting the ever-growing demands of the Education Department both in educational and sanitary matters. The difficulties of adjustment were enormous and are not yet surmounted. Alfred, being a churchman, studied the whole matter with great care, and made many speeches in support of the policy of helping the denominational schools—feeling unable, in Lord Salisbury's words in a letter to the Duke of Devonshire, 'to accept any measure which aids undenominational religion out of the public funds, and refuses the same aid to denominational religion.'

During these years his practice in Common Law was gradually increasing, and before long he was very busy, though perhaps not quite as well paid as when he was working at the Parliamentary Bar.

The years were very happy, in spite of a certain



anxiety as to whether Alfred could stand the nervous strain of two professions. Even in August 1895, when he had only been in Parliament three months, he wrote to Lavinia :

I am feeling a bit afraid of things just now : dubious, I mean, about my strength to do the work without any exercise, and gloomy at having so little time to see any one. . . . However, I suppose Election time is worse than it will be again.

Another letter to Bernard Holland repeats this feeling :

GOSFORD, LONGNIDDRY, N.B.,  
29th September 1895.

MY DEAR B. H.,—I have just read your article in the *National Review*, to my mind almost a perfect picture of dear old FitzJames in his qualities and his limitations. . . . It is the best article I have read for ever so long.

I fell unarmed the other day into a society of golfers at St. Andrews who fell on me on the subject of my article some time ago, in the same magazine, about golf. And I had to defend myself in a jocose speech by pretending that I had written it to dethrone pure reason from her seat, as Whately did by disproving the existence of Napoleon. They were greatly pleased by this ingenuity, and no niblick was thenceforward necessary on the green.

What are you aiming at now, old fellow? The Dook is now head of the Education of the country. . . . But I don't know whether you are looking in that direction or elsewhere. There is nothing either there or anywhere for which you are not too good. But all those who are not doing it may remember with consolation, that the Bar and Parliamentary life, which looks gay from outside, has a tendency to make a dog's life of existence.

Bless you, old friend. Give my best love to your wife.—  
Your ever affectionate

A. LYTTTELTON.

## CHAPTER V

### CONSTANTINOPLE

1897

As in a dream the spectres rise  
Of blinded kings and shattered creeds,  
And still through all the centuries  
The open wound of Christendom bleeds.

A dream, a nightmare. Ah, what sights !  
What wizard tales these stones enshrine ;  
What weltering depths, what perilous heights,  
These stones of ruined Constantine.

I HAD vowed I would never force Alfred abroad again however much I might long to travel. It was his habit to keep up a pretence that he really wanted to go here and there, only I knew better.

But fortune favoured me, for the Foreign Office briefed him for a case in Constantinople in which one of their officials was involved. The fee was a good one, so he not only took me with him, but my sister, May Balfour. The legal work lasted six weeks ; it was an intricate technical case, with nothing to be gained by winning it, but a serious matter to lose because it involved the status and reputation of an English judge. Alfred threw himself into the work with ardour ; he had to deal with cunning tricksters as well as with stupid and blustering people ; the occasion required the exercise of discretion and personal authority, in addition to the performance of an advocate's duties. There

were many anxious moments, but all went well finally, the official having been guilty of nothing worse than indiscretion.

When it was over Alfred resolved to take his two companions for a little trip to Broussa and then by sea to Greece. Constantinople was repugnant to him in its dirt and dilapidation. The dogs were still inhabiting the town, and these fierce mangy creatures lying in holes on all the footways, and their dismal howling and barking at night, got on his nerves.

There had just been a massacre of Armenians, and streets of houses, blood-bespattered, were left derelict. On the house opposite the Embassy some one who had watched, told how a small party of Armenians had taken refuge on the roof, and could not be dislodged. The Turks at last climbed up through a trap-door, and the Armenians, instead of killing as many as they could one by one, surrendered directly and were all murdered. The massacre was done by order from the Palace; respectable cultivated gentlemen would go and do an hour's killing after their work; the police, the rabble all lent a hand.

Our party attended a Selamlik at seven in the morning, when representatives of all the different sections in the state, Army, Navy, Church, etc., passed in single file before Abdul Hamid. Alfred had been so impressed by the cruelty and callousness of the attempted extermination of a whole race that he could hardly contain himself as the subservient officials bent low and carried the dust to

their foreheads: fortunately Europeans were not expected to take any part in this ceremony.

The Vali of Broussa, however, had absolutely refused to allow any massacres in his district, so that when he invited Alfred and his fellow-travellers to visit him we went with eagerness.

Broussa, the ancient town in Asia Minor, lies at the foot of hills, indeed much of the town is built on a slope. It has one or two beautiful mosques, but the interest of the place is its population: shepherds in huge felt cloaks with strange zodiacal signs chalked on them in red, identical with the cloaks in Assyrian bas-reliefs, peasants with their white shirts and full trousers, Jew traders in long kaftans, soldiers, priests, and veiled women peeping out of their houses. The people were friendly enough, in sharp contrast to Stamboul, where the hatred and scorn of the English at that time was not concealed. The Vali lived in a modern villa built half-way up the hill; he was large and imposing in his dark-blue robes. As he could not speak a word of English, or Alfred a word of Turkish, conversation languished. Alfred did his best, by low bows and waving hands and smiles, to convey respect and admiration, all of which the Vali received in gravity and silence. Then coffee was handed round, which relieved the situation.

Alfred did not love sight-seeing for its own sake, nor did he readily get away from the atmosphere of England; he was like an unwilling child at a party, trying fitfully to be interested. As this book attempts to give a picture of his character rather

than a chronicle of his life, it is unnecessary to describe in detail the journey through Greece.

Sir Edwin Egerton was then Minister in Athens, and being an old friend of my family he invited us to stay at the Legation. The war with Turkey was going on, but it seemed to make curiously little difference except to the beautiful Greek wife of Mr. (afterwards Sir Edward) Law, who was in a state of nervous tension, and started at every cry in the street. Mr. Law had been on the steamer from the Golden Horn to the Piræus, and had talked with such enthusiasm about the extraordinary beauty of his wife, that Alfred was quite as excited at the prospect of seeing her as of seeing the Acropolis. Neither disappointed him: to appreciate the lady needed no previous training, and for the wonders and beauties of Greece, Eton had prepared the way. And then there was a memorable bathe with May in the blue sea off the rocky coast at Nauplia, cave dressing-rooms in plenty, and rock diving-boards too, and hot tea ready for them when they were dressed again.

During these years very few letters of Alfred's exist. He and I were rarely apart, and owing to the tremendous pressure of his work he hardly corresponded with his sisters and friends. But there is one letter perhaps worth inserting here, written when he was at Littlestone and I was obliged to stay behind in London.

LITTLESTONE, 24/5/99.

I cannot get over the thought of you still there, and it mars the whole pleasure of it. Yesterday indeed would

have been perfect with you here, the most caressing of South winds, the brightest of seas, and in the evening the moon flooding the slow swinging seas. . . .

This morning I am consoled on your behalf, for it is cold and wet and very useless for everything save the rigour of the game. I am tremendously impressed by the Temperance Book<sup>1</sup> which I am devouring. I don't feel sure that some day I may not do a hopeless thing with a touch of the heroic in it ! But we must watch. If only the spirit of these wise men touches the vast body of fanatics and sillys, who make up so much of the temperance party, we may see something done which is of use. But we must pay for it, or nothing just will ever be done. I also read *Weir of Hermiston* right through yesterday. The love scenes literally made my blood run like fire, they are so beautiful. I am going to read *Quentin Durward* to-day with the *Temperance*, and see whether the great magician can really surpass this, the best of Stevenson's work, so overpoweringly. If only you were here . . . ' *E possibile?* ' As it is, you must only remember how profoundly essential you are to me and everything about me which is of any use.—Your loving  
A. L.

<sup>1</sup> Rowntree and Sherwell's.



## CHAPTER VI

### 'HEAD OF THE POLL'

1899

Four ducks on a pond,  
A grass bank beyond,  
A blue sky of spring,  
White clouds on the wing ;  
What a little thing  
To remember for years—  
To remember with tears.

WILLIAM ALINGHAM.

ALFRED was not really a child lover. He tired quickly of the inevitable noise and unresponsive silence : he always said of his son, ' I 'm no good now, but wait till he 's older, then I shall be.' But the children, aged seven and five, were beginning to assert themselves, and it was disagreeable leaving them for three months in the autumn and a month at Christmas. I was in revolt also at passing all the holidays in other people's houses. In those days Alfred was very restless ; he was incapable of staying in any one place much more than a fortnight, he liked perpetual change, and a social life expertly planned and arranged, so that he could be with people as much as he wished, and could also be alone when the need seized him.

It was for this reason that visiting in other people's houses was such a pleasure to him. He had leisure, air and exercise, talk and silence or intimate companionship as he desired. For me it was different :

I played no outdoor games, nor could I, unluckily, walk a great deal, and I longed for more home life in the country. But I could not give up going with him everywhere. It was only in the holidays that I saw him at ease, and I was obsessed by a sense of the shortness of existence, and lived in all that touched my intercourse with him as if the next day might be the last.

I persuaded him to try a holiday home of our own in the country, and we took a little farmhouse at Bawdsey in Suffolk, within reach of the Felixstowe golf links.

It was rather a gloomy coast—cold and sunless in winter, and Alfred could not forgo Scotland in August and September. So we did not keep it more than three years, and finally moved to a house we built on the Muirfield links at Gullane, thus for a time combining Scotland and all it meant to the golfer and sportsman, with a seaside home for the children.

Bawdsey Hall is mentioned chiefly because it was here that a poodle, called 'Head of the Poll,' after the Leamington election, was drowned, and no picture of Alfred would be complete without mentioning his love of horses and dogs.

He had not the same gift with them that he had with human beings; his affections were not always requited, but they did not abate for that reason. His two hunters, Corûna and Zanzibar, parted from when he gave up hunting, were always remembered. 'Poll' really became a part of his most intimate life, being one of those animals who

cannot exist separated from their masters. 'Poll' loved his mistress the most, but he recognised that she was not to be worshipped apart from the long-legged being beside her. So he was content to be with either of them. Every night he struggled to be allowed to stay when he was sent to his basket, every morning he greeted his owners as if years had passed since he had seen them, as if the world were made anew for them all, in his joy and delight at finding them still alive. Alfred never went anywhere without him, though sometimes there were difficulties: he could not run forty to fifty miles after our bicycles when we hurried on in front of the Highland trap, making for Glen Callater or Kinloch, forests rented by my father. He was tied to the box-seat of the fly, and his dismal yells could be heard echoing among the hills. He plunged after us when we went out in a boat on the loch; he was nearly killed pursuing an express train to London; and he lost his life at last by a desperate effort to get home when he had been left behind on the other side of the great tidal river at Bawdsey, by a guest who did not know his temperament.

He had been washed, and I thought a run with the pony cart would be good for him. He looked round at me as he went down the drive to express his reproach and misery at being sent away with strangers, and this was the last time I ever saw him. When out of sight of the house he was put down to run. When the cart reached the water's edge on the return journey, about two miles from home, 'Poll' was missing. The last ferry boat

which crossed at five was waited for, but he did not appear. This made the guests very late, and every one was a little anxious:—then I heard 'Poll' bark joyously outside the window and cried, 'Here they are at last.' But there was another spell of waiting, and when the guests entered, unhappy about the dog, I assured them he was already home and went to look for him. But it was not so. 'Poll' must have come down to the water's edge, found no one there, and plunged into the river which flowed between him and home. It was a cold dark night of wind and snow, and battling with the current, lonely and terrified, he was carried out to sea and drowned.

Perhaps just at the end he dreamed of home, and love, and the fireside, and was able to send a message to the ears of his mistress. Two or three days later he was washed up on the shore. Alfred buried him in the sand himself, and when he told me about it, the tears poured down his cheeks, as they did down mine. 'Poll' was never forgotten, and his dear and individual ways were always held in remembrance.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Our friend, Grace Blackburn, afterwards Lady Wemyss, who was staying with us at this time, wrote the following lines :

Alas for loyalty and love,  
So lightly lost, so cast away !  
Alas for eager beating heart  
That death, and death alone could stay !

He heeded not the icy chill,  
The darkness of the rushing tide ;  
He thought he'd meet, perhaps he may,  
His master on the other side.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE BOER WAR

1899-1900

Now understand me well : it is provided in the essence of things that from any fruition of success, no matter what, shall come forth something to make a greater struggle necessary. My call is the call of battle.—WALT WHITMAN.

THE year 1899 was shadowed by the approaching Boer War. The quarrels between the two white races holding South Africa were increasing in complexity and intensity. Broadly speaking, the demands of the British were equal treatment of all whites, and better treatment of the blacks. The Boers held that they were a chosen people to whom, and to their descendants alone, the land belonged ; the natives were placed in convenient contiguity by Providence, to act as drudges for them, and all others were Uitlanders—people outside the covenant. The gradual course of the controversy is familiar to every one. The great trek of 1866, when the Boers left Cape Colony and settled in the Transvaal ; the British annexation of 1877, because the new Republic was practically bankrupt and in imminent danger ; the Transvaal War in 1881, when the Boers rose in arms to assert their independence ; the tragedy of Majuba, when a small British force was overpowered ; and the subsequent peace, spelling to the majority of the Boers not magnanimity and conscious strength, but weakness and fear.

It is conceivable that in the lapse of time the animosities aroused might have slumbered and been finally forgotten, if gold had not been discovered in the very country to which the Boers retreated. President Krüger promised the strangers, the gold seekers, every possible assistance, but he gave them no representation in his Government, and while he used the fruits of their labour to enrich the state, he kept all the political power in the hands of his burghers. An outbreak had nearly occurred in 1894, but was averted ; in 1895 came the Drifts crisis. In order to evade the excessive railway rates for all oversea goods, on the little run of fifty-two miles between the Vaal river and Johannesburg, the traders were forced to unload south of the Vaal, and place their goods in ox-wagons and cross the river by the Drifts. President Krüger then closed the Drifts, as ports of entry, to oversea goods. This high-handed action roused great indignation among the Boers and Britons of Cape Colony. The British Government was appealed to, and Mr. Chamberlain, being then Colonial Secretary, sent a grave remonstrance out to the President. The Drifts were reopened, and an undertaking given that no other proclamation on that subject should be issued before the advice of the British Government had been asked.

In the years that followed, if President Krüger had been a man of larger views, he might have done much to satisfy the Uitlanders without materially injuring his own schemes. But he did nothing to ease the situation ; in fact, he only roused further irritation.



In March 1900, after a series of incidents, a petition to the Queen, signed by 21,684 British subjects at Pretoria, was sent through the High Commissioner, Sir Alfred Milner, to England. The petitioners were 'potential citizens of character and position': the British Government took up the question vigorously, the abortive Bloemfontein Conference was arranged, when what was in effect a sham settlement was offered by President Krüger, and rejected by Sir Alfred Milner. The Reform movement within the Transvaal was joined by the capitalists when it became evident that the Reef gold industry was more permanent than had been imagined. But no constitutional agitation bore the slightest fruit, and even Mr. Rhodes, through his great influence with the Afrikanders, failed to affect the resolution of the old burghers in the north. Revolution began to be talked about, but the actual plans were unknown to every one, when suddenly the Jameson raid startled the peace of Africa and even Europe. To quote Sir E. T. Cook's admirable book, *Rights and Wrongs of the Transvaal War* :

What would have happened if Dr. Jameson had not, in Mr. Rhodes's phrase, 'upset the apple cart' it is impossible to say. What actually happened was the worst that could have happened. Those who were essentially in the right were placed, by the action of Mr. Rhodes and Dr. Jameson, in the wrong. Those who were essentially in the wrong were placed in the right. . . . All this is true, but it is not all the truth . . . the Raid was essentially not the cause of trouble in South Africa but a symptom of it, and therefore, though it may have furnished an excuse for Mr. Krüger's policy, it was no justification.

The President then had his seven years' franchise bill passed by the Volksraad, and the British Government hoped that it might prove the basis of a compromise, and proposed a joint inquiry into the law. This was rejected. After many and prolonged discussions over the cable, President Krüger, on October the 9th, 1899, sent his ultimatum which meant war.

Alfred had many heart-searchings about the justice of the cause. He writes to his sister Lucy from Scotland :

11/10/99.

The war is much the most serious matter which I can recollect. I was at the beginning disposed to be pro-Boer, but after a long and careful study of the Blue-books, etc., I feel entirely easy in mind and conscience about the whole affair, and am perfectly satisfied that we have a just cause. If any of our dear kinsfolk are wiped out there, this will be a consoling thought.

Neville Lyttelton, Alfred's brother, was appointed to an important command in Natal, and he and Katherine stayed in Great College Street a few days before he started. No one then thought the war would last long or that Neville would have much more than an agreeable sea trip. Christopher Balfour in the 60th Rifles, my brother, also went off blithely from Kinloch talking of races at Newcastle in Natal. Many other relatives and friends in the army started full of confidence. But gradually the country became aware of the greatness of the task it had undertaken. No one who saw it can ever forget the manifestation of calm courage shown by the British people at home during the

black week when our armies were checked on the Tugela in Natal, at Stormberg in Cape Colony, and on the Modder River in the Orange Free State. There was no panic, no wild recrimination, nothing but grim determination to see the thing through, and not to admit defeat. Then began the universal volunteering, and nothing but his age and his ignorance combined, kept Alfred back. He was in a fever to be off, but Ladysmith was relieved, Cronje surrendered, and the country began to hope for the end of the war. He was not, however, to be denied his part in the great struggle. A call for his work was coming which would stretch his powers and test his capacity to the full.

By the summer of 1900, questions concerning the peace that was to follow were already occupying the minds of the Cabinet. A very large number of concessions in the Transvaal had been granted by President Krüger and the Raad to various companies and private individuals; many of these it was believed had been obtained by extensive bribery, and were against the interests of the country as a whole.

Alfred was asked by the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Chamberlain, to be chairman of a Commission that was to examine the various claims and report on which should or should not be maintained. He was told that he might take out his secretary, his manservant, and his wife; while of his two colleagues, one, Mr. Ashmore, was to join him from Ceylon, where he was acting as Treasurer, and the other, Mr. Loveday, was already in Pretoria.

Alfred's spirit bounded to the task; he never really hesitated although he asked for a day or two to consider. He had lately taken silk and become a Q.C., always an anxious moment in a barrister's career, and there was some hazard in leaving England at such a time. My feelings were mixed. On the 3rd of June our third child, a boy, christened Antony, was born, and the very day the decision was to be made I took the three children to the station and packed them into the night express for Scotland. I said good-bye to them nominally only for a week or two, but with many pangs over the probable long separation. It was very hot, and I drove from the station in the stifling air to dine with Mr. and Mrs. Asquith, where I was to join Alfred and learn the final resolve. He came in late, and I heard him say at once that he was to start in a week. Then I had to settle whether or not I would go too; an election was pending, Alfred was uneasy about his seat, and I wondered if I ought to stay and work in the constituency for him: the baby was only two months old, and I could not bear to leave it. I also dreaded the sea journey inexpressibly. But the dislike of being separated from Alfred and the desire for travel and experience were stronger than any other impulse, and one morning I woke up to find I had decided. The agent in Leamington was reassuring, the children were well and safe with their grandparents in Scotland, and on the 11th of August 1900, Alfred, Bernard Holland, whom he took as secretary, and I, sailed in the s.s. *Briton* for Cape Town.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SOUTH AFRICA

1900

To gather the minds of men out of their brains as you encounter them, to gather the love out of their hearts.

To take your lovers on the road with you, for all that you leave them behind you. To know the universe itself as a road, as many roads, as roads for travelling souls.—WALT WHITMAN.

THE Chairman and Secretary of the Transvaal Concessions Commission, as it was called, landed at Cape Town on the 28th of August, and stayed first at Government House with Sir Alfred Milner, where Mrs. Hanbury Williams, the wife of his military secretary, was acting hostess for him. The house was thronged with people all day long: soldiers returning home, soldiers on their way to the front, doctors, politicians, journalists, secretaries, visitors. The discussions were quite frank and open, for inside Government House there were no doubtful adherents. There was much talk of the waste of life and material, of muddle and delay and incompetence, but much too of heroism and courage and splendid discipline. One of the curious and stimulating effects of a great national crisis is the sincerity and intimacy of general intercourse which seems suddenly to be developed. The smaller interests and prejudices of normal life are swept into insignificance by the realities of danger and suffering: no one is afraid to show his heart for he is sure of being understood.

At these times the brotherhood of man becomes a living fact, sympathy is the common medium, and the whole level of human nature seems to be lifted. Such an experience is in itself a great adventure; to Alfred it came also as a fresh inspiration. He was one of those people whose presence brings joy to others, and in this time of anxiety and ferment he drew to himself the aspirations and the enthusiasms of every one he met, and made them his own whenever he could.

Sir Alfred Milner knew enough of Alfred's work to feel glad that the difficult and delicate business of deciding which concessions made by President Krüger were to be withdrawn, and which ratified, should be in the hands of a man both acute and just, and one also who could never be suspected of anything short of absolute impartiality. Alfred was longing to get to work at once; his fellow Commissioner from Ceylon was expected in a few days, Mr. Loveday from Pretoria had already arrived; but there was an obstacle. The Governor wanted the Commission to be a Royal Commission, and this could not be arranged until the Transvaal was annexed. Day after day went by in vain hopes that the annexation could be decreed, but peace was not even concluded or in sight, and Lord Roberts kept postponing from week to week the formal pronouncement. This delay fretted Alfred greatly; he was nervous about the effect on his Bar practice, if he did not get back in October for the autumn term; he was worried about the election in England, and he could not get to grips with the details of



his work. All this made him envious of the Land Settlement Commission ; Mr. Arnold Forster had been appointed about the same time, yet he was already hard at work with an office and typewriters and clerks duly installed ; the reason being that much of this Commission's inquiry concerned districts outside the fighting areas, and therefore not affected by the dragging on of the war.

Alfred wrote to his sister Lucy from the Mount Nelson Hotel, Cape Town :

We have heard nothing fresh about Navy. . . . We have got a very heavy task here, but I think I see daylight through the trees, and when we once begin sitting on October 1st, I have hopes that we shall finish in a month at any rate. The trying part is remaining here for nearly two months, as is probable, the first month without more than half-time work, and very little opportunity of exercise, for they seem to do not much of that here. Now and then I ache for the moors and the hill and the river, the mist and the shade, but generally I feel the absorbing interest of the whole thing and I rejoice at the opportunity of being some use. D. D. is well . . . she is the keenest possible traveller and loves the whole thing. It is a great thing to have her here in a lovely little sitting-room of a good hotel looking over Table Bay. We have had a good many talks with Milner. He is handsome about English opponents, such as Bryce, whose views on S. Africa he thinks quite natural in one who knows 90 per cent. of the case, but who from absence from this country does not know the last 10 per cent.

Read De Villiers' letters. They are an extraordinary vindication of the war, by a man with every natural bias against us.

One of the most burning questions was the status of the Netherlands Railway Company, which built

and manned the Transvaal Line. It demanded exemption from all compensation claims, on the ground that it was a non-combatant, and held a neutral position. The facts however did not square with this assertion, and Alfred held strongly to the view that the company, and therefore the shareholders, must pay. There were many arguments about it, for Bernard Holland espoused the cause of the old lady in Holland, conjured up by his imagination as the typical innocent shareholder who would suffer.

Alfred used to thrash out every subject with his secretary, who usually took an opposite view with great persistence and subtlety; but instead of irritating or worrying him, this opposition seemed to be just what he needed. There was always a moment when, having cleared his own mind, he closed further debate. On a long walk, interrupted by rain and wind, the two stood together under a tree struggling over the non-combatant case, quite heedless of the weather. At last Alfred said, 'Now, B. H., it's no use talking about it any more, for I've made up my mind, and you must take that point as settled. The old woman has got to pay!' This was said with his hand on the other's shoulder and his eyes smiling in amused sympathy.

I kept a diary during the whole of our journey, and some extracts from it will now be given :

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,  
CAPE TOWN, *Thursday, 30th August.*

The adoration of every one about him for the Governor is very remarkable. His quick sympathy often makes

people fancy he is weak in personal matters, but it is really one of the sources of his great strength, for he is quite capable of over-riding his leanings when necessary, and on the other hand his sympathy often helps him to find a way out. . . .

I only saw the outside of Rhodes's House, but that was quite lovely, a long two-storied white Dutch house, every detail most perfectly carried out. I have never seen a more beautiful place altogether. Imagine the lower slopes of Table Mountain, green, and studded with all kinds of wild flowers,—here and there groups of fir trees and Stone pines, and wherever it is shady in every crack and glen, the ground covered with white arum lilies. On one side Table Mountain towers above you—and to the north you look over a vast plain, the greater part of it dotted with white houses, to a splendid range of hills the snow still lying on them. It is like Italy—only larger, grander, richer. I cannot describe the wonderful impression of vigour and life—the radiant light, the great spaces, the luxuriant and yet quite healthy growth, the faint humming of birds, and everywhere voices, for there are people at each turn, swarming over the slopes, straying all over the gardens, picking the flowers, laughing and talking. It is quite a different ideal from ours. Take Rhodes's place—he is one of the richest men in the world, but his house fronts on to a public road, a few yards away there is a steam tram, at his very gate is another villa, and the whole of Cape Town is allowed to wander over his park—right up to his windows, look at his animals, lie under his trees.

A little expedition into the interior was made.

PAARL, 16th September 1900.

In the afternoon we walked up Paarl hill behind the Inn and got a most splendid view of the rich valley, all showered with blossom, pink and white, here and there the rich red and purple of different shrubs showing up against

the white walls and the brilliant sky. A big river also runs through the valley, to which Paarl owes its prosperity. We dined at 6.30 and should have found the evening long but for an exhaustive talk on the war with our host Gaspareuthus. This man left Germany when he was 19, and came to Cape Colony as manager of the Groot Constantia wine cellars—he did not stay there long, but wandered about, and went north on a great hunting expedition with twelve farmers. Of this party, one was killed by a lion and two died of fever—they went right up into Rhodesia. He got some post under the Chartered Company, knew Rhodes and Jameson, fought under Wilson and Selous in both the Matabele Wars, went back to Germany, and finally settled down here and married a Miss Krüger from Somerset East. But he will not stay long. I asked him why he did not go to the German Colony. He looked at me and laughed, and said he knew I was going to ask that; but he said, 'I have fought for the English and done all I could, why should I not enjoy the privileges of an English Colony?' and then he proceeded to tell me how hopeless a German Colony was—no free trade—no concessions without months of correspondence—necessity to be a German subject, and so on. He summed it up well by saying, 'The Germans are good colonists but bad colonisers.' We suggested he should go and see the Kaiser and tell him all this. His view of Rhodes was interesting—he evidently liked him personally, and told us a story to illustrate his kindness of heart. He was in command of a small troop which was escorting Rhodes back to Kimberley, and one of his troopers had the colic and began groaning. After a bit Rhodes looked out of his cart.

'Gaspareuthus,' he said, 'what is that man groaning about?'

'Oh, it's nothing, sir,' I answered; 'he has the colic.'

But Rhodes would get up. 'Let's go and see what's the matter with him,' and so we went, and Rhodes cheered him up, and then told him he must sleep in the cart, and he would sleep with me underneath it. And the man

wouldn't, but Rhodes dragged him up and hauled him into the cart and then lay down beside me.

'Of course,' said Gaspareuthus, 'it was quite right of him, but lots of people wouldn't have done it.'

Sir Alfred Milner had been through a period of great anxiety. The Bond Ministry at the Cape was of course restive, Cape Colony was full of sympathisers with the Boers; many who had deplored President Krüger's action could not but go in spirit with their fellow-countrymen. Those Dutch who remained, as so many did, absolutely loyal to the British Government were sorely tried, for there were few who did not have near relations fighting in the north. Families were inexorably divided in this way, and loyalty was stretched almost to breaking point.

CAPE TOWN, 24th September 1900.

Alfred and I went to the Parliament House: Sauer was to bring forward a motion praying Queen Victoria not to annex the two republics. Many streams of opinion and feeling were represented. Sauer sat backed by all his Bond members with Merriman beside him; the Government was represented by Sprigg, and beside him Rose Innes, a little dark-moustachioed vigorous man, without whom the Government could not have held a day together. The cross benches were quite full, Schreiner at the head, tall, slouched, with a dark rather heavy face, fine eyes, and a dreamy kindly expression; Solomon, the future Attorney-General of the Transvaal; and beyond them various people sitting on the fence. Botha was in the House and voting steadily with the Government, as he said the English had always treated him well.

Sauer made a wretched oration; he had several pamphlets and leaflets in his hand, notably one of Stead's, which he



quoted from perpetually. His speech was made up of quotations chiefly from obscure people, two clergymen, a man some one he knew had spoken to, a gentleman whom he had met some years ago ; in fact, a scrapbook article badly pasted together. But Sprigg who followed him was even worse, certainly worse to hear, because he was standing for England, a bitter and foolish performance without any form, a mere spitting out of unconvinced venom, ending up with saying the Boers were only now reaping what they thoroughly deserved, and calling their President a common thief. There was a sudden hush when Schreiner rose, no one feeling sure what line he would adopt. He began very quietly, although, as we were told afterwards, he was roused to fury by Sprigg's speech and could hardly be kept in his place. The speech was one of the most interesting, moving, and in a sense pathetic things we had ever listened to. Here was a man, brave, honest, high-minded, an idealist, born with a mind so delicately adjusted, that the absolute right could never lie for him on either side of a question, his sympathies and understanding so wide and tolerant that his heart was always divided ; a burning love of justness and a desire to preserve this rare atmosphere, and all this congeries of qualities precipitated into the midst of one of the most complicated and difficult situations that a public man has ever had to face. He spoke for an hour and a half ; he bared his inmost thought, he spared himself the expression of no fraction of his sympathies, his condonations, his tenderness, and yet he was able to be absolutely stern and inexorable. 'We must never repeat the spectacle,' he said, 'before the eyes of the world and of the native population with its millions in South Africa, of the two white races at each other's throats. The cry for giving back absolute independence is impossible. How can it be otherwise ? Does history show any example of a nation, having spent the flower of its nationality, and money to the tune of perhaps a hundred millions, winning and then saying "*Status quo ante*," the thing is idle ; it is not thinkable ; ethics cannot penetrate politics to that extent.'



And yet through every sentence he spoke there breathed the most passionate sentiment for the two Republics, after admitting all their faults and follies. Addressing the Bond, he declared their motion was an unkindness to the fighting Boer, for the Bond knew perfectly well, as every one else knew and recognised, that surrender and submission must come first.

‘Don’t imagine,’ he cried, addressing the Government bench, ‘that hon. members opposite do not appreciate the gallantry of small parties still holding out against overwhelming odds, still struggling, though they must know they never can succeed in their endeavour. They have a lump in their throats over it, just as you have.’

It is impossible to give an impression in words of the man’s emotion, combined with his clearness of vision, and absolute justness to every shade of opinion and feeling. Through all this mass of seeming inconsistency, slowly, laboriously, he pushed his way, giving here, taking there, explaining, adjusting, but himself steering straight across with his own wide magnanimous beliefs. It was a splendid intellectual effort born of a large nature ; it was useless as a contribution to practical politics.

Alfred, as we came out of the House, lifted up his arms, with a sort of exclamation, half laughter, half shout, very characteristic of him when he was stirred.

On the 3rd of October, just before the start up country to the Transvaal, I was out walking with Sir Alfred Milner. He discussed the future of the colony, and suddenly told me that he wanted Alfred to succeed him. I thought he meant as Governor of Cape Colony, and began to say that Alfred could not give up the Bar, did not want to leave England, and so on. Then he explained : he had already written home suggesting that Alfred should be

appointed High Commissioner for the whole of South Africa. He spoke of the high opinion he had formed of his friend's ability and strength ; he drew a vivid picture of a great opportunity, the task of piloting the new provinces safely through Crown Colony government to full responsible government ; the possibility of federating all the States into one great Union. He made work in the Law Courts and the House of Commons seem dull and stunted in comparison.

I hurried back, and ran upstairs when I got to the hotel. Alfred was not in the sitting-room, and I found him lying on his bed to rest his back, studying some documents. I poured it all out to him eagerly ; he was silent with surprise, he could not believe that I had rightly understood. I had always combated Alfred's diffidence about himself, and tried to make him trust his own strength ; now I brought him proof that my belief in him was shared by some one more important than myself.

Nothing is more delightful in the companionship of marriage than an opportunity for one to give to the other words of praise and encouragement. Alfred's whole nature was stirred by the idea that he should have been chosen by a man like Sir Alfred Milner to finish the great work begun in South Africa. We talked of it all and of the future for a long time ; many unspoken hopes and ambitions found expression, and there was a secret resolve in his mind to go forward, and try to be worthy of any task which might be set him.

In September 1900 Queen Victoria, on Lord Salisbury's advice, dissolved Parliament, and the elections were fought in October, mainly on the Boer War and the annexation of the Transvaal. No one could forecast what would happen at Leamington, but in spite of a formidable opponent, Mr. Mackinder then standing as a Liberal, Alfred's constituents returned him by a substantial majority. He sent a grateful cable of thanks to the people who had worked so hard for him during his absence, and little guessed what would cause him to fight another election in three short years.

Preliminaries had at last been sufficiently arranged so that Alfred could begin his sittings in Cape Town on the 1st of October, and move up to Pretoria three or four days later. I was most anxious to be allowed to go with him, not only for my own sake, but because I thought I might be useful in dull domestic ways. Sir Alfred had cabled to Lord Roberts asking permission for me, saying I was really needed as a housekeeper, a message, in fact, which would have melted any heart. Luckily for me, not being the wife of a soldier, my case would form no precedent, and so after two or three days of suspense the permission came from Pretoria.

On the 4th of October we started, Alfred and I, Bernard Holland and Mr. Ashmore. The journey, which lasted a whole week, was full of interest, not without danger, and gave us an impression of all the three colonies. Constant raids were being made on the line; the train which ran just before ours had been attacked, and another train behind was

afterwards burned ; no travelling was allowed at night, when the train was shunted into a siding and laagered.

At Viljoen's Drift, one of the famous fords which Krüger tried to close, the train was held up for a long time. Rumours were going about of fights fifteen miles down the line, De Wet on the kopje near by, De Wet breaking the line, and hanging up a passenger train from the north, and so on ; but at last the train got across the partially destroyed bridges and into the Transvaal. The country here, as seen from the line, was much more beautiful than anything in the Free State, the hills nearer and the veldt richer ; and in spite of the war and the blockhouses every mile or two, there was a certain air of prosperity ; more trees, better stations, all betraying money in the background. The train was just passing a fearful heap of débris, a Red Cross train which had been burned, when suddenly, looking out over the lonely untenanted veldt, the passengers saw something like a chimney, and then another and another, and found they were within sight of the famous Rand, and for twenty miles were to run by tin houses, great headgears, and huge mountains of crushed quartz, gleaming white.

Pretoria was reached about 7.30. The Diary records :

Mercifully the owner of the house we had taken met us, and the Military Governor had sent an orderly with four carriages, for without a pass we could never have got out of the station. The confusion was indescribable, no one

seemed to be in authority, no one knew where and when and how the luggage trucks could be unlocked. We had to abandon everything and just come off with our handbags. It was too dark to see anything but long dusty avenues of trees, or rather fringes of green to the roads. We were getting along well in the American Consul's carriage, when we heard a great shouting, and a mounted orderly came galloping after us to say that all the carriages must be kept together, or some of them would be arrested and kept for the night. So we clattered along in close order, and after a mile and a half drew up in front of a pretty little thatched villa with a good garden.

The sittings of the Commission were held in the second Raadzaal, the Transvaal House of Commons, a large ugly room, but dignified because spacious. There was a raised platform at the end, with space for two or three chairs. The one in the middle was generally occupied by the Speaker, but was President Krüger's when he paid a visit to the Lower Chamber. Alfred took this chair, Mr. Ashmore sat on his right, Mr. Loveday on his left, while below, at a row of desks, were Bernard Holland, the shorthand writer, and later on Lord Alexander Thynne, who was attached temporarily to the Commission as assistant secretary. The first case taken was that of the Netherlands Railway, and its claim to be treated as a non-combatant. Van Kretschmar, a Hollander, was the manager, and he was forced to admit, one after the other, damaging facts against his company. It turned out that 3500 out of 4000 of their employees were foreigners, not Boer subjects, yet they were encouraged to go on commando, and their wages paid notwithstanding, and men



were actually dismissed who refused to go on commando. The Blue-book, page 27, states :

The general understanding between Mr. Van Kretschmar and the Government clearly was that every employee of whatever nationality, who could be spared from the actual railway service should be at the disposal of the Government for military duties, and Mr. Van Kretschmar admitted, in his statement, that in many instances he supplied the Government with lists of the men available. We call special attention to the fact that he went much further than this, and brought the strongest pressure to bear upon non-burghers who did not wish to take arms in the quarrel.

Van Kretschmar's letters described interviews with Krüger and Joubert, and his impatience with the latter for refusing to take any preparatory steps. Alfred, by a skilful cross-examination, managed to establish perfectly clearly the connection between Van Kretschmar and his directors in the Netherlands, an important point for the Government. Here was a so-called neutral company, its employees almost entirely subjects of a State friendly to England, claiming all the privileges of a neutral body, while under this guise it had been actively waging war against it. Van Kretschmar in one of his letters wrote, 'Gone are the dreams of a greater Holland,' and mournfully concluded by saying that the Hollanders, he well knew, were hated by the Boers, even more than were the English, and would be kicked out like the English at the first possible moment, and that 'he must now think only of the material interests of our company.' But it was a little late for that. Gone were the dreams of a greater Holland.



The Commission advised against the continuance of the concession to the Netherlands Railway Company, stating that a monopoly of the kind was injurious in any case to the best interests of the country. To quote the Report again, page 35 :

Belligerents cannot be permitted to assume the character of neutrals at their convenience, or to claim the privileges of one class without permanently losing those of the other. A distinct election must be made, once and for all, for no one can be allowed to be a winner in either event.

The Report went on to state that the shareholders were the proprietors of the company, that they could elect and dismiss managers and directors, and were plainly legally responsible for the actions of the company. The claim of the debenture holders was fully admitted by the Commissioners.

Perhaps the most interesting among the many curious business transactions which were examined was the Dynamite Concession. This monopoly had always been bitterly resented by the mining industry ; it was accused of charging an excessive price for the dynamite, which, instead of being manufactured in the country as it should have been, to comply with the conditions laid down by the Raad, was imported from Europe.

It was clearly desirable in the public interest that the monopoly in the hands of this company should be put an end to or modified, for although ultimately it did erect a fine factory, its administration was recklessly extravagant and its gains were utterly disproportioned to those of the State, and were a heavy burden on the largest industry in

the country. Yet the Government did not use the right which it possessed to cancel, or for a very long time even to modify, the contract, but on the contrary condoned the breaches of it by the company. . . . The Raad ultimately adopted and confirmed the Government's action. A policy so astonishing requires explanation.

The explanation was found in the wholesale bribery of every sort of person with influence, and even of the members of the Raad itself. As Mr. Max Philips, the chairman of the Dynamite Company, wrote to his son, acting for him in Johannesburg :

I am specially sorry to gather from your letter that the Volksraad persists in the same opposition as before, which is not exactly encouraging for us ; still, these gentlemen are very amenable to advice of the chinking kind (*klingendem Rathe sehr zugänglich*), and, as I have said above, don't be sparing of it, so that we may run no chance of a fiasco.

And so indeed they proved to be, for in 1899, instead of spending £9000 and £10,000 in 'convincing' people, £20,000 was spent, with the result that on the 29th of August the Volksraad adopted, by a majority of 18 to 9, the Report of the Commission.

The cross-examination of some of the bribers employed by the company was full of interest. One, a heavy blue-eyed Dutchman, looking like a north-country farmer, tried by every kind of absurd evasion to escape admitting the plain facts. But he was remorselessly pursued and cornered. There was another man, too, of a very different type—Mr. Max Philips's son, a thin elegant young man. He had a trick of lifting

the corner of his lip as if he were snarling. It was difficult for him, because, though he did his best, it was useless to lie with his father's letters before the Court. Mr. Ashmore had a theory that people with Eastern blood in their veins could control their eyes, their mouths, their hands, but that the toes always betrayed the liar, and accordingly he used to stare fixedly at the beautiful shiny patent leather boots worn by the poor witness. But most interesting was an engaging personality well known in the Transvaal called Sammy Marks. He related with delightful candour how he received £10,000 a year from the company for doing nothing, merely, in fact, for refraining from doing something. He had stated that he wished to have a quarter share in the company, but Lippert the emissary, when he returned from Europe, said, 'My friends do not wish to have any partners in the business, they want to do the whole business themselves,' upon which Mr. Marks replied, 'If that is the case, I shall oppose you through thick and thin.' Finally he obtained as the price of inaction, a royalty on each case of dynamite, and the total given him often amounted to more than £10,000 a year. Alfred in summing up said, 'You got that because in 1886 you told Mr. Lippert that you were a large consumer of dynamite, and that you wished to have a quarter share in the factory, a quarter share which you never paid anything for.' Mr. Marks smiling broadly, 'I do not think I have paid anything . . . it was through my own foresight that I got all that money.'

Interested people used to come into the Raadzaal and hear the examinations, men who had raged for years at the profits of this particular company, many who had themselves been examined and judged in that very hall. The Commission recommended that Her Majesty's Government should decline to recognise the dynamite concession—'we are convinced that no right or title, giving the company any claim to consideration at the hands of Her Majesty's Government, can be founded on acts of the late Government of the Transvaal and the Raad, which were induced by recent and extensive bribery.'

Altogether about twenty-three concessions were investigated, the greater part demonstrating the easy conscience of the Raad members, from President Krüger downwards, who, though there was no evidence of his taking bribes himself, undoubtedly closed his left eye when his members wanted a 'chinking argument' to convince them.

Alfred distinguished himself greatly during these proceedings. He was a born judge, scrupulously fair and unbiased, sympathetic, his sense of humour a servant not a master, and always capable of sternness and unflinching severity if he thought these were needed.

A delightful incident of our time at Pretoria was the arrival from the front of Alfred's brother Neville and my brother Christopher. Christopher Balfour had been shut up in Ladysmith for the weary months of the siege, and when General Lyttelton came in with the relieving force, he took Christopher on

with him as his aide-de-camp. To quote the Diary again :

I was sitting out in our garden developing some photographs, when a mounted orderly rode up in a cloud of dust and said the Commander-in-Chief wanted to know if Mr. Lyttelton lived here. In a few minutes a gorgeous aide-de-camp arrived, and stated that the Commander-in-Chief was coming to visit me, so I hurried down to the garden gate and received Lord and Lady Roberts. An escort of about twenty men were ranged in a row, an Indian soldier mounted sentry in the garden, and one or two aides-de-camp stood about waiting. Lord and Lady Roberts both seemed very tired and sad—for the war had not spared their hearts. They told me they had meant to go to Natal to visit their son's grave, but Lord Milner had just telegraphed that he was coming up. When they were going, and we walked down the path, Lord Roberts turned to me, 'Tell your husband we shall soon have his brother down here. I've telegraphed to him to-day, that as soon as he gets to Middelburg, which I think he ought to do about Monday or Tuesday, he is to come down here.' It was characteristic of Lord Roberts's extraordinary sympathy and kindness, that as he had one or two things to talk over with Neville, he should purposely summon him while we were in Pretoria. He also added to me, 'Your brother is with him, so I think he had better bring him too.'

Lord Milner arrived in Pretoria on the 15th of October, and the next day he came to see us with a mounted escort of about ten men. He told us that Lord Roberts was going home immediately, that Kitchener would probably only stay a very short time, 'and the permanent man is to be your man,' namely, General Lyttelton.

The following evening Lady Roberts invited us to dinner, and added in her note, 'We hear your

brother-in-law will come in to-day, and we hope to have him with us.' We went down to the station more than once to meet Neville and Christopher, but at last were obliged to set out for our party. When we were half way through dinner at the Commander-in-Chief's house, news came that the train had been signalled. 'Send down and bring him up here,' said Lord Roberts. Then Lady Roberts: 'Fred—say the General is to bring up her brother.' 'Oh! of course he will,' answered Lord Roberts, 'but telephone all the same that aide-de-camp Balfour—is that his name?—is to come up too.' We went into the drawing-room, and suddenly through the open door I saw a khaki figure, and then another taller and thinner. I jumped up from my chair. 'Run out,' said Lady Roberts, and I flew into the passage. Some one was putting his helmet down. 'Christopher! Neville!' I called out, and in a moment was hugging two very dirty people, half laughing, half crying. Neville looked splendid and well, Christopher worn and haggard. The meeting between Alfred and Neville was quite delightful, they were like two schoolboys. Neville insisted, between the mouthfuls of a huge meal, that he and Christopher, and another aide-de-camp called George Thesiger, and a soldier servant, would all come and stay with us. 'But there are no rooms,' I said feebly. 'We've got our own beds and washing things, and we can sleep in the garden,' was the firm reply. Good quarters belonging to General French were pressed upon him, but he would not hear of them. 'No, thank you—I could



not think of going anywhere else but to my brother.' In due time George Thesiger arrived with a cart and four beds. The two aides-de-camp slept in a sort of pantry, the soldier servant in the verandah, and Neville in Alfred's dressing-room. Hospitality is easy enough when people bring their own blankets, their own washing and cooking apparatus, and sleep on the floor.

The next day Neville was appointed Commander-in-Chief to succeed Lord Kitchener, and believed he could start home the following week for a holiday. How little any of them thought then that it would be a year and a half before peace was concluded.

*20th October 1900.*

I went home and found them all still hard at work on drafting reports. In a few moments, however, Alfred was ready, and I drove him down to the cricket ground, a pretty place, surrounded by beautiful trees, showing against blue hills in the distance. It was rather fun: Alfred played very well, made lots of runs, and I enjoyed watching him, also talking to lots of nice soldiers. The match was *Civilians versus Military*. Several Boers played, some of whom had been on commando against us, and in the very middle of the game some of the soldiers were ordered to go out and fight, and the Military eleven was damaged. Alfred of course got into personal relations with his fellow-cricketers at once, specially with a civilian who had been fighting against us.

The formal annexation of the Transvaal took place on the 25th of October. The Diary relates:

At 3.15 I went to Lady Roberts and drove with her and her two daughters to the review. It was a splendid sight—the soldiers did not look at all smart—but much better than smart. Every sort of hat was worn, and every

shade of khaki from the mud-stained coat which had been out for many days, to the brand-new yellow just made in Pretoria. The ceremony began by the British flag being run up as Lord Roberts came on to the ground, Kitchener riding with him. Then he presented eight or nine Victoria Crosses, pinning each one on himself, and shaking hands with the men. It was very moving; almost too much so for poor Lady Roberts, whose son should have made the tenth in that gallant row. The Queen's Proclamation annexing the South African Republic, henceforth to be called the Transvaal, was read, and then the troops marched past. There were about six thousand, and every one of them had been under fire. Another tragic moment came when the company of the 60th Rifles, to which Freddy Roberts belonged, went by, and it was impossible not to cry when one looked at the three poor strained faces of the women, and guessed at the emotion hidden under the calm of the little man on his big brown horse. The Highlanders were tremendously cheered. I saw a few Dutch people—not many—and felt my heart ache for them. I could hardly enjoy it for the grief and the pain hidden behind the pageant, and yet I felt proud, too, to be English.

The weather was very hot and Alfred's health began to flag; the bad food, the dust, the constant enteric fever cases, created a depressing atmosphere, and a gloom was cast over the whole town by the death of Prince Christian Victor, beloved by every one.

After three or four days at Johannesburg the party travelled down through Natal to Durban, visiting on the way Ladysmith, Waggon Hill, and Colenso. The following extracts from the diary may have some interest :

*1st November 1900.*

. . . We started through driving mist and rain which just lifted enough to let us see the deep gorge of the Tugela,

and the great precipitous hills, which seemed to close in tighter and tighter as we left Ladysmith. We made out Pieter's Hill, and I think Hart's Hill, and of course we ran right through the kopjes where all the fighting was. But it was terribly disappointing to have to peer through such a mist. . . . We drew up at the miserable little station at Colenso, and for some minutes felt rather uncertain what to do. However, finally Alfred, Mr. Ashmore and I attired ourselves in thick boots and mackintoshes, while the others pusillanimously stayed in the saloon carriage. Our driver, a man who had once been in the Bays, was on the ground a very few hours after the fight, in fact he had volunteered to give Buller information about the lie of the land.

In the driving wind and rain, he bumped us along the muddy ground, down the long slope to the river well hidden in a deep channel and fringed on the southern side with thick trees in which thousands of men could, and did, lie hidden. He took us close up to the fatal donga in which the guns were stopped, and pointed out the place where poor Freddy Roberts lay like a wounded deer, all day. The river makes such a great sweep that Hlangwani Mountain seems to lie on the opposite side, whereas it is some distance off on the same side. Going over the ground makes one realise the absolute fatuity of the attack, the long gradual slope down to the river, the wide fringe of scrub and low trees, the long entrenchments in the banks of the deep river, and beyond it the tangled and tumbled kopjes for a final retreat and defence. An assault upon such a position was madness; by seizing Hlangwani it could have been turned. Buller is said to have believed that the hill lay on the other side of the river. We crossed the railway bridge, and entered, for that is the right word, one of the Boer trenches, already four feet lower than it had been because the rails and debris from the broken railway line had been taken off to be used again. The trench was a wonderful construction: a man on horseback could ride along it unseen, and it twisted and turned like a snake,

making the segment of a circle. Alfred found the bowl of an old pipe stuck in the mud walls ; of course many of these trenches were inhabited for weeks and weeks. Our guide told us that he had found all kinds of things in them—purses, letters, pipes, matches. We climbed up a kopje on the top of which was Fort Wylie, entrenched with stone walls. From here it was easy to see how Hlangwani was the key to the whole position, Hlangwani which was actually taken by some colonial troops on that disastrous day. Buller is said to have stated that he could not begin by taking Hlangwani as he had not large enough guns to command the other kopjes and enfilade the Boer position from it. There is not much in this defence, for he must have had them before he moved to Spion Kop. . . .

Our friend told us as we walked towards his shanty that he had been engaged by Cook to show people over the battlefield ; hundreds have already visited it. . . . He presented me with one or two things I was glad enough to have, though one naturally likes the relics best which one picks up oneself. One he gave me had a peculiar pathos and interest, a stand of Mauser bullets which he took out of the bandolier of a woman he himself found in a trench under Hart's Hill ; she was lying with her hand in the hand of a man next her, her bandolier half empty . . . there were no less than five women in this trench and about seventy bodies altogether. . . .

We embarked at Durban and after a horrible rough voyage on a small dirty ship we reached Cape Town in time to catch the *Tantallon*, and had a delightful journey home with various soldiers and volunteers on board. Alfred worked all day long at his report, and wrote a great deal of it on deck.

Then came the joy of seeing England again, and the docks at Southampton when the happy people whose brothers and husbands and sons were safely

on board, came down to the water's edge and looked up at them as they stood leaning over the rails.

A long wait, a dark train journey, Waterloo and Pont Street (our own house being in builders' hands), with delightful chuckles coming through into the street from the hall door; a flood of light; Oliver and Mary wild with joy, and upstairs the little fat baby sound asleep.

## CHAPTER IX

### A SPEECH IN THE HOUSE

1901

That kind of chivalry which I, for one, am proud to call English—great fortitude, patience and endurance, quick enthusiasm and generous sympathy for a cause not exclusively profitable, and disposition to subordinate personal and material interests to abstract ideas which *à tort ou à raison* satisfy its sense of right and justice.—ROBERT, FIRST EARL OF LYTTON.

IN 1901 Alfred served as a member of the Royal Commission on the Port of London, and played a useful part in the work. It was on the report of this Commission that the successful new government of the Port was founded.

When Parliament met again he began to devote his attention specially to South African subjects, and the first speech he made which gave evidence of the power within him was on his work out there.

A member of the House of Commons made a violent attack on the reference to the Transvaal Concessions Commission. He declared that it had been carefully framed so as to shelter the mining magnates, and further that Mr. Loveday was a gentleman in the employment of Messrs. Wernher, Beit and Co. and under their influence, and so should not have been nominated a member of the Commission. He implied quite clearly that Mr. Loveday would not be able to give an unbiased opinion, while at the same time declaring that he



had nothing to say against Mr. Loveday personally, and did not wish to throw dirt.

The attack took every one by surprise. Mr. Chamberlain spoke in defence of the Commission he had himself appointed, and Alfred's opportunity came next. His indignation at the unfair and unwarranted attack upon honourable men roused all his latent fire, and he poured out a torrent of words. He had, of course, an entire mastery of the subject, and though quite unprepared, was able to meet his antagonist on every point.

I was dining alone at home that night, unaware of what was happening, but Lady Frances Balfour, who was in the Speaker's Gallery, with characteristic sympathy and promptitude sent over a scribbled note saying that Alfred was being attacked and was going to reply at once. I rushed over to the House and got there just as he began.

Alfred brushed away the vague accusations brought against his impartiality and honour as Chairman, saying he did not think it necessary to defend himself.

Does the Hon. Member [he asked] intend, or does he not intend to convey to the Committee that Mr. Loveday was under the improper influence of Messrs. Eckstein? If he does not intend to convey that to the Committee, then his observations were irrelevant and impertinent. But if the Hon. Member shelters himself behind one of these generalities, unfortunately too common nowadays, of desiring not to throw dirt, then I must suppose that the Hon. Member was neither irrelevant nor impertinent, but that he was merely inaccurate, and that he did make a charge, and that the purpose of his words was in truth

and in fact that Mr. Loveday was under the improper influence of Messrs. Eckstein.

He told the House that Mr. Loveday was certainly a director of the Electric Lighting Company of Pretoria in which Messrs. Eckstein had a large interest.

Is everybody who is a director of a company in which another person has an interest, under the improper influence of that person? I think not. But I have better evidence in regard to that matter in favour of Mr. Loveday.

He then stated that Mr. Loveday had been a prime mover in getting the Volksraad to cancel the concession to that very Company. His critic admitted that he knew this.

What does the House think of the candour of the Hon. Member making such a charge against an honourable man as that he is under the improper influence of Messrs. Eckstein, and not disclosing to the House the fact which he knows, that Mr. Loveday's exertions were devoted to procuring the cancellation?

His heat and vigour drove all before him; not another word of attack was uttered, and he never again had to defend the findings of the Commission from any such assault.

The actual report was not published till April. Alfred was gratified by the following letter from Mr. Chamberlain; his recommendations were all accepted and acted upon, and only in one point was his finding over-ruled. The payment of compensation to certain shareholders of the Netherlands Railway Company was a matter of policy, and as an act of grace the British Government allowed

the claim of the mythical old lady in the Low Country, whose cause Bernard Holland used to plead.

40 PRINCE'S GARDENS, S.W.,  
24th April 1901.

MY DEAR LYTTTELTON,—I spent some hours last night in reading the most admirable and amusing Report which you have presented as the result of your labours in South Africa. You will, of course, receive a formal acknowledgment and expression of official thanks to yourself and your colleagues for this most important report, but in the meantime I hope you will allow me to express my personal gratitude to you for the service you have rendered, and at the same time my admiration for the patience and skill with which the mass of facts collected by you has been digested, and the very great ability with which it has been presented in literary form.

I found the report as interesting as any comedy, and I am convinced that the public will be of the same opinion. The result of your work cannot fail to be of great service to the Government.

I should like to publish the Report immediately without waiting for the evidence if it is not quite complete. The sooner the proceedings of Messrs. Krüger, Leyds, Vorstmann, Oppenheim, *et hoc genus omne* are presented to an admiring world the better.—Believe me, always yours very truly,

J. CHAMBERLAIN.

## CHAPTER X

### ANTONY

1901

O God, to Thee I yield  
The gift Thou gavest, most precious, most divine !  
Yet to what field  
I must resign  
His little feet  
That wont to be so fleet,  
I muse. O joy to think  
On what soft brink  
Of flood he plucks the daffodils,  
On what empurpled hills  
He stands, Thy kiss all fresh upon his brow,  
And wonders if his father sees him now !

T. E. BROWN.

I long to get to you; let us be more and more to each other, myself less distraught with vanities and ambitions; more steady, and firmly prizing the immeasurable blessing which you bring me, not letting it lessen by custom. Thus when we come to part may we never have the anguish of what might have been. Kiss Antony and the other babes.—*Letter from ALFRED.*

ALFRED, as has been already said, was not at his best with small children. He could not play with them or be interested in their ideas and ways. If there was anything to be taught he would do it patiently: golf, cricket, throwing and catching balls, billiards. He also read aloud sometimes to Oliver and Mary, but it was really an act of self-sacrifice. Yet he was quite different about the youngest one, Antony, who seemed to have touched a new chord

in his heart. The little curly-headed baby, whom we found fat and rosy on his nurse's lap when we returned from South Africa, had developed quickly. There was something rare about him, a quicker sensibility, a keener love than is quite common. He was full of laughter and fun, but he had a way now and then of relapsing into a kind of silent dream, especially if the love of any one or anything was possessing him. He would lean his little fresh cheek against Alfred's brown one with a sort of passion of contentment, very moving to watch. He was enterprising and brave too, full of wayward impulses, checked in a moment if he were appealed to.

On the 17th of December 1901 he died quite suddenly of croup. He had already had one or two attacks and was failing a little, but his eager temperament and strong vitality prevented those about him from realising that his heart was already tired, and could stand no further strain. This was the second time Alfred had lost a child. He was stricken to the heart; two or three times he said, 'I'm not fit to have a child; I'm not fit to have a child!' He wrote to his sister:

*17th December 1901.*

DEAREST LAVINIA,—Very suddenly this morning after a distressing night our little baby died. I can't tell you what it is to both of us. Of course it is worse for D. D., but I had a feeling for him such as I never had before. Perhaps it was the consciousness of his fragile life—or perhaps only his marvellous sweetness and brightness. You will know what it must be to D. D.—Your loving

A. L.

The following letter was sent by Mary Drew :

BUCKLY VICARAGE, CHESTER.

ALFRED DEAREST,—And I opened your letter so light-heartedly ! I saw he was different to any other baby for you—such a winning darling little fellow, his curls were exactly like yours as I remember you a baby at Hagley. . . . Your first great sorrow together—May God give you still the fragrance of that little flower even now that He has taken it from your sight. May I hope he will rest at Hagley ? . . . These are Uncle Billy's words about children—I love them :

' They come into the world full of faith, hope, and charity, ready to *trust*, ready to *love*. They are little fresh, brilliant rivulets poured straight from Heaven—into the old muddy stream. . . . They take up the song of the world's joy anew, as freshly as the first children that ever came as divine messengers from Heaven, in the early dawn of the world's history. . . . What light, what radiancy of light they pour around them, making a sunshine of a shady place.'

It was so darling of you to think of me and write to me and so keep up the unbroken chain of our shared sorrows and joys.

Alfred mourned his little boy and never forgot him, but it is in the nature of things that a grief like this can hardly be the same to a man as to a woman. The mother of a very young child suffers when it dies almost physically as well as spiritually : the sense of its dependence, the sudden inability to guard and help, and, worst of all, the impossibility of getting into any sort of relationship with the spirit of a being who has not yet spoken.

In the extremity of anguish, kneeling beside the body of my little son, I passed through one of those strange experiences of an intense emotion, which for a moment seem to pierce the surrounding dark-



ness with a shaft of light. I suddenly became aware, in a far more acute form than ever before, of influences which indeed are always about us, but of which I had lost consciousness in the absorptions of a full and happy life. This realisation helped me over the first terrible days, but it was many months before I could shape my own beliefs from the inchoate mass of confused impressions, promptings, and experiences. I went down into the very pit of despair and doubt, and only slowly and gradually climbed out of it. Alfred did what he could to help externally, but I could not discuss this dreadful battle of the spirit with him. I had to fight alone, as every one must sooner or later. His tenderness and care were unfailing, he was old in grief, and he counselled hard work. I felt afterwards that perhaps the struggle was prolonged by this advice, for experience teaches that in complete quiet and stillness if it can be endured, comfort and strength are born. But it cannot always be endured, and work is at least an anodyne which Alfred had himself found helpful.

At Easter time he took me away to Biarritz for ten days, and the cessation of all work, the solitude, for I was alone all day, marked a change for me. I was like some one coming up out of a pit into the light of day with a treasure in my hand. For now I believed in the spirit, and from that was springing a belief in many things taught by those who can see God in this world.

Alfred had never been assailed by doubt, and his faith stood the test of great suffering. He did

not question what he had been taught, because he always possessed an inner certainty which was content to accept the form hallowed by centuries. I had no such certainty, and it was not till after the bitter experience of loss and grief that something of this inner conviction was granted to me also.

## CHAPTER XI

### NEWFOUNDLAND

1902

Take me and cast me where you will. There I shall still have my deity within, serene. . . . Is change of place any good reason for my soul injuring and debasing itself by cringing or craving, or cowering, or flinching? What indeed is worth that?—MARCUS AURELIUS ANTONINUS.

IN August 1902 Alfred was asked to go out to Newfoundland to arbitrate in a dispute between the Newfoundland Government and some contractors, about the State Railway. The original claim was for a large sum of money, about 2,500,000 dollars, in payment for certain stations, wharves, fences, etc., provided by the company outside and beyond their contract. The Government disputed the claim on the ground that other contracts had not been fulfilled.

The sacrifice of the holiday was a great distress to him, and I was pusillanimous about the whole enterprise. It was clearly impossible for me to start with him, as the new house we had built at Gullane in Scotland had to be put in order, and the children established there. I tried to conceal my wish that the brief should be sent back, and arranged that I would join him after a week or two, and travel out with Spencer Lyttelton, always ready for a journey.

RAVEN HOTEL,  
SHREWSBURY, *17th July 1902.*

Your letter was a great break. I have been so long accustomed to the truly sporting way in which you rise to

every situation that it was a sad blow to feel I was going to give up all my cherished holydays to an enterprise which you did not like and perhaps would not share in. But once embarked in the pursuit of ambition, which is a very questionable chase, it is, I fear, no use doing things by halves. And to refuse *good things* in my profession, and for the Government, is fatal. But I can't tell you what a cheer it is to think that possibly you may come, and once more have with me a delightful new experience and a learning of things richer and stranger than can be acquired in delicious Scotland. Are you sure you are in good spirits? . . .

At the last moment my health made it impossible for me to travel, and I had to stay behind at Gullane. My youngest brother, Reginald Balfour, who happened at the moment to be free, went with Alfred as private secretary.

Alfred wrote from board ship :

S.S. *Pretorian*,  
QUEBEC, 21st August 1902.

No journal can be kept of a voyage, especially as for the first four days matters were as bad if not worse than from Durban to Cape Town, and my only consolation for a miserable time was the reflection that you had escaped the prospect of it. But after Tuesday things mended, and we have read a great deal and talked also much with some dear old Nonconformists who are going over on a Congregational Mission, and with one of whom, 'Jones' of Bournemouth, we have both made real friends. I daresay you would not be surprised at Regie's knowledge of theology, which makes him a rare comrade for such men. Regie's coming is the greatest possible success; he is a charming comrade, makes friends with every one in a perfectly natural and tranquil way—not the least in the Yo-Ho manner of the inevitable organiser of sports, and player with the children, who as a rule appears. There are a good many really nice people aboard—the Canadian women being, as you know,

more refined than the average middle-class Briton, and far easier and prettier in manner. We have missed the Saturday connection and shall not begin the Arbitration till Thursday. This was a sad worry—at one time owing to the villainous weather it looked very doubtful whether we should catch even the Tuesday. But Sir R. Bond is on board and made so light of the delay that we have not fussed at all.

One of the true advantages of shipboard is the perspective which almost at once it gives. It would be a glorious thing if forethought should never be exchanged for 'fear-thought.' We had the usual concert, Regie—'Who is Sylvia'—accompanied by me, and I of course being run in for a speech which Regie thought rather happy. I say again it has made the whole difference having him—delightfully fresh and suggestive and deliciously good. Take great care of yourself. I pray that you are not suffering or having much discomfort.

It was obvious from the first that the counsel engaged in the case had a tendency to prolong the discussion and to provoke ceaseless delays. Points were raised at the very beginning only to be deferred as not coming within the scope of the arbitrators, and it was proposed that all questions of law should be removed from their jurisdiction and referred to a Supreme Court.

Alfred felt, under these circumstances, that he had been brought all the way from England as a jurist, and was now to be used merely as an assessor, and that a scandalous waste of public money was the result, both by paying higher fees than were necessary and also by unduly lengthening the proceedings. Unable to make the opposing counsel come to an agreement, he tendered his resignation.

In a letter I wrote to him when I knew nothing

from the newspapers but the bare fact of his resignation, the following passage occurs :

Frances [Lady Frances Balfour] drove over here the whole way from Whittingehame yesterday to find out if I knew anything. Arthur, she says, remarked at once, ' You needn't worry ; Alfred would never resign his holiday, his journey and £2500 except for a point of honour, and he 's sure to be right.'

The following letters trace some of the disquieting fears and doubts whether his action would be understood :

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, ST. JOHN'S,  
NEWFOUNDLAND, 10th September 1902.

We had a successful train journey from Quebec to Sydney, with the exception of a foul 6 hours' unpunctuality which landed us there at 2 A.M. instead of 8 P.M.

Then too the journey round this island was interesting, and we met two old friends at Sydney, Sam Whitbread and J. Cobbold ; but we were three days late, which was a great blow to us tho' no one minded here in the faintest degree. We are comfortable and very well befriended here by Sir C. Boyle, the Governor, a brother of Courtenay's. But I fear I am in for an awful long business. When we began, the Counsel on both sides had the impudence to say the sittings must be from 3 to 7. And during the three days which we sat on those terms, we did not get more than half of that time out of them. On the Sunday I wrote a most scathing memorandum resigning my appointment, saying I did not choose to take a large fee for a part in a transaction of the kind, involving for other reasons, besides those I have given you, such a scandalous waste of time and money. My readiness to give up my fee impressed them all as astounding, and the resignation made a great and salutary impression, and at present things look far better, while they still know that similar behaviour



will expose them to my resignation again. I am therefore happier for the present, and am not feeling as before, that I am being made a fool of by local barristers. But the permanent trouble is that the third Arbitrator, who has the decisive voice between myself and the Arbitrator for the Claimant, is an Engineer quite ignorant of law, and though I believe him to be straight, the situation, which leaves him master more or less of the case, without the training, as he admits, to understand it, is really most painful. Altogether I have never in my life wanted you more. . . . The sad part of the thing is that it has caused an amount of friction and exasperation—a sense of a tiger in a cage—that I have not felt for years. And this in the middle of my poor holyday. Still I am in much better spirits since my coup d'état, which I am told has rallied the whole community with me against the lawyers, and which certainly has at present made a wonderful effect. Regie is and continues to be a delightful comrade; I don't know what I should have done without him. In our happier moments we have had long and most interesting talks on many matters, suggested by James and other of our readings. It is good to have some one who has your blood in him near me, for I have sworn I will never voluntarily be away from you so long again. I think it would be well to put in the *Leamington paper* and the *Times* that I have not been able to accept the 'Viceroy's invitation,' as it is not well that I should be thought to be going off when I am not, and you might write to Mary;<sup>1</sup> I will to George.<sup>2</sup> You may have missed it, but our being of the Viceroy's party was mentioned in the *Times* and elsewhere. A consolation for the whole affair is that you are not in for it too, for it would have been terribly tedious to you. Regie likes the place very much, and there is a golf links of a kind, where we can get a little exercise, if not much else. All ideas of any fun after the case are

<sup>1</sup> Lady Curzon.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Curzon, then Viceroy of India, had invited us to India for the Durbar in celebration of King Edward's Coronation.

gone. Don't think I am dragging my leg; I have set my teeth, and unless they drive me to desperation by wasting time I shall try and worry through. . . . Your letters with Lucy's were an enormous break. . . . Kiss the Babes, and heaven speed the hour of return.

On the 30th of September he writes :

I am able to send better news from here. There is a possibility of my getting away by the 10th or 12th, but it is a bare possibility. But the cheerful part of the matter is that I am getting my way in the Arbitration, and by prolonged, and I hope tactful negotiations, arguments, threats, have a good chance of finishing up the matter in a way which will bring ultimate harmony and a termination to the whole affair, instead of a vista of appeals, etc. etc., which at one time appeared inevitable.

Finally the award of the arbitrators, giving the Reid Newfoundland Company about a third of its claim, was well received, and a long-standing difficulty and hindrance to the development of the Colony removed.

Alfred was jubilant at getting away ; he and his secretary spent a night or two in Boston on their way home via New York, and were subjected to a most severe course of sightseeing. He was buoyed up, however, by a comforting sense of accomplishment ; his trouble and hard work had been worth while, for the justice of his award was acknowledged. He had a delightful voyage home, and Regie and he often talked afterwards about a certain lovely fellow-passenger who was fenced in and guarded in a marked way by her husband. They were determined to get speech of her, and on almost the last day Alfred succeeded. The husband was in the Colonial Service,

and long after Alfred tried to help him to a better billet for the charming girl's sake, although he never saw her again.

Regie's wife and I went to the station to meet the travellers, and found them both unable at first to talk of anything else but their new friend, and their regrets at parting with her. This tactlessness, though tiresome, was treated with indulgence.

## CHAPTER XII

### OFFER OF COLONIAL SECRETARYSHIP

1903

This is thy life : indulge its natural flow,  
And carve these forms. They yet may find a place  
On shelves for them reserved. In any case  
I bid thee carve them, knowing what I know.

T. E. BROWN.

LORD SALISBURY, whose health had been failing, resigned in July 1902, and Mr. Balfour succeeded his uncle as Prime Minister.

The first important measure passed by his Government was the Education Act of 1902. The fight, which was a very bitter one, turned mainly on the proposal to give denominational schools a share in the rates without transferring them completely to elected authorities. Alfred often took part in the debates ; he held, as has already been said, that the claim of the Nonconformists to dictate a colourless form of religion was not to be tolerated. He himself would have been content enough with a simple basis for all, and would have permitted the Church and the Denominations to add such teaching as they desired. But he knew that this did not satisfy the large majority of churchmen, and he felt that the conscience of the churchman was as entitled to respect as that of the Nonconformist. He therefore supported the Education Act of 1902, which relieved an intolerable strain on churchmen and their schools. The measure was not approved by many members

of the Liberal Unionist wing, and some of them reverted to the Liberals, now led by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman.

During these years Alfred's work was exacting more and more of him, for his growing influence involved him in every kind of effort outside and inside Parliament. Partly owing to my experiences in South Africa, I had taken an active part in the efforts of the Victoria League to promote a greater understanding between the people of Great Britain and the Colonies. It would have been wiser, perhaps, had I confined myself to the business of managing my house and children, for the inevitable public claims upon the wife of any member of Parliament were already severe enough. In March Alfred wrote to me from Beaulieu, Lord Montagu's place :

I was rather heartbroken at leaving you so seedy and at scolding you. But I could not take it back altogether, because I do not think that you realise what it is for me to see you continually exhausted, and the perpetual fear that it gives me. . . . But if I am over anxious about you, it is because I know what you are to me and the children, and how helpless and miserable we should be without you. So you must look at the proportion of things, and reflect what a Colonial Club or a set of lectures are when weighed in the balance of your dear health.

In April I went to Florence to visit a great American friend, and the following letters were all written to me at that time :

TAPLOW COURT, TAPLOW,  
BUCKS, 26/4/03.

My anticipations of a lonely Saturday were dissipated by a telegram from Ettie,<sup>1</sup> whom I sat by last night, and

<sup>1</sup> Lady Desborough.

who was very dear and sweet to me. She has still infinite possibilities in her, and no one can say that she will not adorn almost every stage of life. It is a charming party, but somehow I feel rather melancholy. We are older and have not the spirit of yore, and every day I am missing you and feeling quite miserable in your absence. I am rather perplexed about Penrhyn (referring to Lord Penrhyn's dispute with the quarrymen); he has sent me his Brief, and in some ways he has a very strong case. But the difficulty is to see a really coherent difference of opinion, worth fighting for. Originally, if the men had been right-headed they could so easily, as far as the Trade Unionists were concerned, have been represented by their Committee in everything, except that it should be termed a representative deputation. I am writing to him to-day to say I have read his case, and have prepared myself to state it if necessary, but that I am too much of a Trade Unionist to make a really effective speech, and shall not therefore intervene unless the course of the debate seems to render it advisable, or in the event of falsehoods requiring contradiction.

It is still horribly cold here. I do trust you are having sunshine, and getting rest and hope in you. . . .

28/4/03.

I am rather dissatisfied with myself for not speaking in the Penrhyn case. I had a conclusive argument ready. On the other hand, the Welsh think that I put my finger on the real point by an interruption which I made, and which they really accepted in my favour in the issue. That issue was—Penrhyn offered to allow any grievance to be represented to him by a deputation, elected by the employees as a body, in any manner they thought fit.

The men insisted that grievances should be represented by a Quarry Committee who were Trade Unionists, and only represented therefore the Unionist and not the Non-Unionist members.

They have now, in the House, abandoned their position, which in my view was untenable, though they have been



holding Penrhyn up to execration for years for not yielding to it. We had all the best of the debate. I made one attempt to speak, but late in the day, and intending to work conciliation: however.—I got your delightful account yesterday of the ill-bred young man. On the whole it seemed more amusing than the reverse—and Pisa and the meeting with Bessie sound very radiant. . . . Arthur Balfour has never been so good as he is now in the House, where he really dominates every one, but I am fearfully afraid he will not stay the distance. . . .

HOUSE OF COMMONS,  
*April 24, '03.*

I have been very much pressed—but if I do not get a proper line now I will write again to-morrow (Saturday), when I shall have more freedom. I have felt very gaunt without you—you can hardly realise the stillness of the house, with nothing to break the silence except the mumblings of the water system, which is quite disorganised by the introduction of the new boiler. I don't think I have ever been without you here except just before the holydays, which somehow does not count, and I do miss you and yearn for you very much.

I had two nice dinners on my return, one with A. J. B. with the Cranbornes and Austen,<sup>1</sup> and the next with the Cranbornes with the same company only Percy<sup>2</sup> vice Austen. We are rather dragging our legs about Arthur's health—he was in bed several days of the holydays, and he is absolutely unlike himself in his inability to get away from his work even at dinner, though of course it makes him marvellously interesting as a comrade. To-night I shall be alone, and to-morrow, and feel rather depressed at the prospect, but I shall read a lot, and to-day I have been wonderfully stimulated by debate. I ought to have spoken—but I get more and more disinclined. And then again I want your encouragement, for the kind of queer diffidence which I more and more feel when it is a question of pushing in.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Austen Chamberlain.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Percy.

Now every blessing be with you. I will write again to-morrow or Sunday.

ASCOT WING,  
LEIGHTON BUZZARD, 24/5/03.

For once it has rained practically the whole day, and your resource would have vanished of soft greys and bright tulips. I want you to do exactly what you like about returning. Ten days ago when you went and I was first alone, I should have hated the idea of your postponing return; but now, when you must be back in a very few days at any rate, I shall not mind your being a little longer than I first expected, and I am most anxious for you to have all the fun and get all the health possible. And it seems a pity to miss delicious Como, for we are scarcely getting any spring, and you have gone such a long way and been only in towns.

Cambridge (meeting about the Cambridge House Settlement) was a great instance of the inconsiderateness of people. X, out of a time limited to an hour and three-quarters, spoke for an hour, and Y, another parson, for half an hour. This left a quarter of an hour for me and the new Head, and as of course I thought he ought to be heard I spoke for two minutes. But this was rather a long distance for a very busy man. But parsons are worse than lawyers for jawing. Fortunately it was nothing but relief to me to get off speaking on so well worn a theme—but the audience was a good one and would have made me forget that. I wonder if you have thought at all, as I have not been able to help thinking, of what it would be to me to go on living alone, and how completely all the springs of my existence would dry up and all the little use I am in the world would be arrested.

Early in November 1902 Mr. Chamberlain invited Alfred and me to luncheon with him and his wife at the Carlton Restaurant, and there told us of his decision to go to South Africa. This was the first time a Minister of the Crown had visited a Colony

in his official capacity—a precedent, and in Mr. Chamberlain's view a valuable one. He was as full of interest and enthusiasm over his journey as a young man of twenty going for his first foreign trip.

The question of the contribution of the Rand towards the expense of the war was discussed, and Mr. Chamberlain was confident that a very large contribution would be forthcoming. The promise to pay was indeed given, but events made it almost impossible for the Colony to assume the burden.

When Mr. Chamberlain returned in the spring of 1903 he found the Cabinet prepared to repeal the shilling duty on imported grain and flour which had been imposed in 1902 without a protest from the party. He began at once to advocate a strong Tariff Reform policy, and thus force a decision upon the question from every private as well as every public man. Alfred had always regarded the matter as one rather of expediency than of principle in the ethical sense, feeling that it was a business and not a moral question. His interest after the South African experience had been concentrated upon Imperial and Colonial problems, and anything which would help, in his view, to strengthen the bonds between Great Britain and the Dominions claimed his allegiance. But it was a time of heart searchings and divisions and anxious discussions both in public and in private.

In spite of my Italian holiday I was unwell and strained, and the doctor ordered me to Schwalbach. So it came about that I left Alfred a second time

in three months. He himself was overworked, and his letters were full of the difficulty and hardship of being alone, the kind of complaints which, instead of irritating the absent, please them mightily, but hardly bear quoting.

Writing from Esher Place, Surrey, he says :

I have had great talks with George Wyndham, who naturally is in gorgeous spirits about his Land Bill. . . . He suggests for Preferential Tariffs a form of bounty to, say, Canada. Give her railways and steamships, a through rate to Galway, and subsidise or guarantee Irish and English railways in the carriage of their stuff at a low rate. This is Sydney Webb in another form, but would diffuse the cost better I think than the bald tax. It is, though far from simple, more straightforward than some of the other policies, and I think it is worth consideration. But of course the English farmer's stuff must be carried at the low rates also.

And again on the 26th, when he was going to speak in his constituency :

I take a plunge about Tariff on Thursday—shall it be a deep one or not. I think on the whole not head over ears, but still covering a good deal of the body. But decisions are tiresome at this time of the year, and this is a very momentous one.

The speech was made at Leamington, and seems to have gone well. The following letter, written while he was staying with Mr. Gerald and Lady Betty Balfour, expresses his views :

FISHERS' HILL,  
WOKING, 2nd July '03.

I have been neglectful of late—but my Leamington visit and speech did make an outrageous addition to the burdens of life. Still it went off splendidly, and all were most jubilant and satisfied. Y thinks very poorly of X

as a speaker, and generally, he is apparently regarded as not of much account. Still I am glad we are going down in October, and much encouraged by the thought that after all the seat does not appear to be in serious peril.

Since I went down, A. J. B. has shown me a splendid memorandum he has written to the Cabinet, written from the Free Trade point of view, advocating retaliatory powers, and indicating also, though not developing, views of possible Colonial preference. In my speech I went for retaliatory powers and preference, but subject to the limitation that no weight must be added to the poor man's budget. And I defined this as the weekly food bill of the poorest men living in honesty and independence. I showed that I must be satisfied not by conjecture as to wages, but by proof that this food bill would not be increased. I think I may stand with perfect firmness and coherence on this definite basis, and A. J. B.'s Memo confirms it finely. . . .

I have had a very happy Sunday here, quite alone with the family. Betty sweet and delightful beyond words, and Gerald, as you may imagine, excellent on the great topic.

When exactly will you arrive, and where? I long every day to have you back.

In September 1903 Mr. Chamberlain resigned the office which he had made so great, in order to devote himself to the cause of Tariff Reform. Mr. Balfour, unlike some of his successors in a similar predicament, did not shuffle his cards and move every one into a different office. He tried to persuade Lord Milner to leave South Africa, but failed. He wanted a man who would carry on the great traditions inaugurated by Mr. Chamberlain, and who had some knowledge of the South African problem confronting the Government, and he found him in Alfred Lyttelton.

Alfred was in Scotland with me and the children

at High Walls, Gullane, when the letter came offering him the post of Colonial Secretary. He did not hesitate, though at the moment he would have given the world for the offer not to have been made. He was always diffident, always ready to believe that others were more able and more fitted for any particular piece of work than he was himself. Success delighted, but never elated him, nor changed his own internal estimate of his capacities, and he was hardly aware of the great influence of his character. The offer was as great a surprise to him as to anybody: he had never worked in a Government office, nor ever been concerned in any kind of administration; he was full of doubts of his own ability, and as the telegrams and letters of congratulation poured in he felt more and more daunted by the prospect of this call upon his powers. At that time the Government were not expected to remain in office for more than a few months, and Alfred feared he would disturb his legal career, lose his earning power and probably fail egregiously at his task. This was his mood; very far indeed from the exultation and delight which office is supposed to bring. But humble though he was, he knew himself to be strong and unafraid of responsibility, and the idea of serving under Arthur Balfour would in itself have inspired him.

The bye-election was entered upon therefore with confused feelings. Alfred was quite unlike himself, unable to rise to the emergency, silent and full of gloomy anticipations. He could hardly respond to the hearty excitement of his supporters



when they met him at the station. Luckily I had hired a little house in Leamington where we could have more peace and quiet than at an hotel, and I took him there and tried as far as possible to shield him. He got through his first reception and speech somehow, then developed an attack of jaundice and was ordered to bed.

Every meeting had to be rearranged, fresh speakers secured, and all the smaller gatherings of workpeople and others addressed by his helpers. The election was a particularly anxious one for the Unionists, because of the insistent tariff question, and every conceivable effort was made by the Liberals to win the seat. It was soon obvious that Alfred would not be able to take any part at all, and that some one must appear to represent him and his views. With many misgivings I offered to speak at all the meetings. I never did more than give as clearly as I could some short message from him, but I was well backed by the Press and a great deal of sympathy for him was aroused in this way. At the last meeting of all he managed to appear, very weak and unstable, but he spoke for two or three minutes and had a magnificent reception. The next day he was elected by a narrow majority.

These days of illness and fearfulness made both of us realise, more than ever before, the closeness of the bond between us. Alfred, usually strong, self-reliant, and joyous, became for the moment almost like a child; I would get in from my rounds in the constituency to find him sitting up in bed with

Colonial Office papers piled before him, a look of despair on his face. 'I can't *think* even,' he would say; 'I shall never be able to do it.' He yearned for his legal work with the regret of a lover; the long official documents were his only comfort because they read like briefs, and I used to welcome the arrival of a fresh batch from London, which would keep him occupied and defend him from gloomy anticipations. He was obsessed by the idea that he would break down in health and be quite unfit for the struggle before him. I had an inner conviction that this fear was in itself the product of illness, but went through some anxious moments when I could not convey my confidence to him. His spirit seemed to reach out to mine and to lean upon such vitality and hope as I could give. And this intimate dependence and contact was a joy in itself. On a day when he was sitting by the fire in his bedroom, I knelt down beside him and tried to comfort him—it was one of those moments when a sense of fusion of spirit is added to the love between two human beings. Alfred spoke of his dread that I should be disappointed in him, and I of my belief that neither success nor failure could destroy him. 'Whatever comes of all this,' said Alfred, 'it has brought us very close to each other.'



## PART III

ALFRED LYTTTELTON

Alfred, we erst, as Summer Circuit came,  
By idling Wye, or Severn's haunted shore,  
Roamed with such rare forensic friends as more  
Of leisure than of learning had—your fame  
Olympic then ; although your studious name  
Black-lettered leaves adorned, and from the store  
Ancestral you did later draw such lore  
As Coke had kept, and you of right could claim.

Tasks sterner than our Courts or fields afford  
You found, and we applauded from afar  
The dexterous stroke, and firm undaunted stand—  
By all the Commons, e'en your foes adored.  
You pass—and like some bright far-faring star,  
The darker that you neared it leave the land.

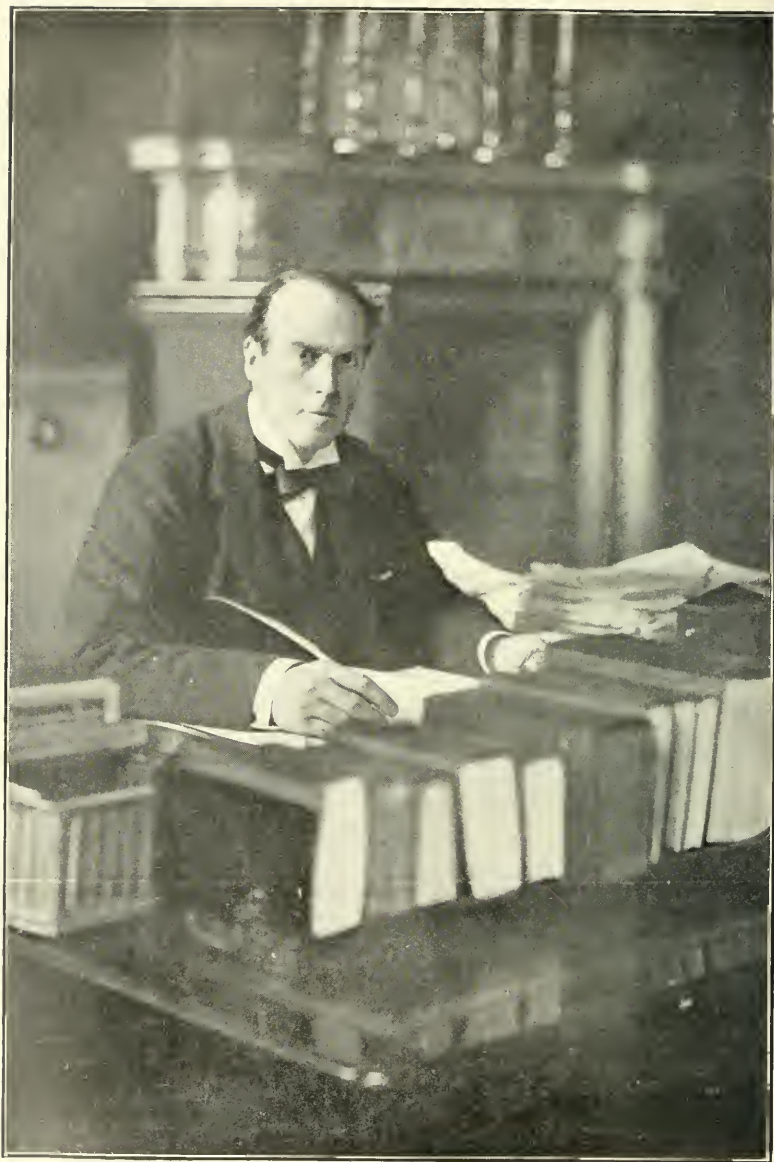
C. J. DARLING,

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*Photo: Elliott & Fry*

ALFRED AT HIS TABLE IN THE COLONIAL OFFICE

## CHAPTER I

### COLONIAL OFFICE

1903-1905

Grant us the will to fashion as we feel,  
Grant us the strength to labour as we know,  
Grant us the purpose, ribb'd and edged with steel,  
To strike the blow.

Knowledge we ask not—knowledge Thou hast lent,  
But, Lord, the will—there lies our bitter need,  
Give us to build above the deep intent  
The deed, the deed.

JOHN DRINKWATER.

ALFRED'S first desire when he accepted office was to persuade Bernard Holland to come and act as his private secretary. He wrote :

COLONIAL OFFICE, *7th October 1903.*

MY DEAR BERNARD,—I liked your letter better than any, and long to see you, for I could put in words so much better what I wish to say.

It is really too absurd that any one with your intellectual power should be private secretary to one with mine. But I should so love to have you here. It probably will last only six months or so and its salary is only . . . but it is just conceivable that with your interest in the Colonies you would care to undertake it. You will tell me of course in a moment if you do not wish it and I shall entirely understand—but I could not forego the chance.—Ever your affectionate  
A. L.

Bernard Holland accepted the post, and the companionship in work was a delight as well as

a stimulus to Alfred all through his term of office. At the beginning also, and when the cloud of depression was still on him, the presence of his old friend was a comfort to him.

When he had been at work in the Colonial Office for a few days he got a message from a well-known civil servant which helped him. 'Tell Alfred Lyttelton,' the message ran, 'that I sympathise with him deeply: I know just how he is feeling—but tell him too that however confusing and hopeless the work seems to him at first, in about six weeks he will begin to find the mist lifting, and to see his way.'

Alfred often thought of this encouragement, for the fear that he would break down still haunted him. The prediction came true almost to a day, and with apparent suddenness.

I had thought he was better, and when he said one morning, 'Well, I suppose it's only a question of time now . . .,' imagined he meant before he was well again. But my hopes were dashed by his finishing the sentence, 'before I break down completely.' That same week we went to stay with Lady Edward Cecil, who had taken Gerald Balfour's house at Woking. On Monday morning, just as I was starting for the train, Alfred having walked on to the station, I slipped on the stairs, hurt myself, and fainted. Lady Edward, suddenly realising that Alfred might be anxious if the fly arrived without me, and fearing the driver's dramatic sense if he were left to describe an accident, called a maid, left her guest lying on the floor, and drove down to the

station to tell him no bones were broken. When I got home I found a little letter waiting for me :

I had a terrified moment when I first saw Violet—but she really reassured me. What would happen to us all, if any ill befell you ?

I mention this incident simply because it marked the very day that the cloud of depression lifted. When I saw Alfred that evening I realised that he was himself again.

It was as well, for almost immediately he was in the thick of a bitter controversy and struggle which needed all his strength.

The scarcity of labour in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony after the war, was producing a dangerous state of affairs.

The gold mines, on the prosperity of which the whole expansion of the country depended, were crippled for want of labour. Every kind of expedient had been tried. A small body of natives, recruited in the British Central Africa Protectorate, had proved unfit for the high air of the Rand. Efforts to get recruits from Lagos, Nigeria, and Uganda failed. There were, at the beginning of 1903, two remedies put forward by people in the country, for all were agreed that the need must somehow be met. The most attractive was undoubtedly the suggestion, mainly inspired by Mr. Creswell, the manager of the Village Main Reef mine, that unskilled white labour should be imported into the country to take the place of the Kaffir. It is easy to say that the opposition to this idea was due to the greed of the capitalist, and his fear that combination among

white men might raise the rate of wages and so curtail profits: and there may be truth in the statement as regards individuals. But the opposition of a man like Lord Milner was due to very different causes. He had tried himself to import white labour for the railways, an experiment which was a complete failure, and became convinced that however attractive in theory, the importation of white unskilled labour would not solve the problem. In Africa no white man condescends to do the work which could be trusted to natives; a skilled mechanic or carpenter always hires a black boy to carry his tools for him: he in his turn becomes an employer. Before long he refuses to do the unskilled work which is demanded of him, even if he came out to Africa for the very purpose. Lord Milner knew also that the future prosperity of the Colony depended 'indeed upon increasing the quantity of our white population, but not at the expense of its quality.' In other words, the position of the whites among the vastly preponderating population of blacks, requires that even the lowest among them should maintain a much higher standard of life than would obtain in a purely white community. The white man must be the overseer, the master of the black, so long as the distance between the development of the two races is as great as it is at present. To introduce on a large scale a white unmarried proletariat into a country where it was vital to preserve the purity of the white race, and maintain at a high level its standard of civilisation, would be a most dangerous proceeding.



But Lord Milner did not press the experiment of Asiatic labour upon the British Government, until the population of the Transvaal itself became convinced that this was the only way out of the difficulty. A statement he made to the Cabinet in November 1903 argued strongly in favour of 'the introduction of Asiatics under a special law providing against the danger that labourers, imported for unskilled work only, might remain in the country when their period of employment in that capacity had come to an end.'

Many hours of consultation did he and Alfred Lyttelton have together when Lord Milner came on a short visit to England. The new Colonial Secretary was aware that such a policy would be attacked by the ignorant and prejudiced as well as by the conscientious, and he examined the problem with an open mind long and anxiously. He was not a man easily influenced by arguments of expediency, he strove always to make his decisions on the highest ground known to him. But he was not a dreamer unacquainted with the facts of this tough world, and as far as a man may, he strove to reconcile common sense and high ideals. He felt that in this particular instance only a bigot could find anything intrinsically wrong about calling in the manual help of another race.

Everything depended upon the regulations and safeguards under which the expedient was to be sanctioned. As he himself said later in one of his speeches :

Do not suppose that His Majesty's Government were



not aware that this would be at first an extremely unpopular thing to do ; do not suppose that we were not perfectly well aware that it would be open to the grossest misconception and misrepresentation . . . though possibly even our imaginations did not take us quite far enough. But we should have despised ourselves if, for fear of incurring a little unpopularity, or of being exposed to misrepresentations, we had refused to do that which we believe to be in the interests of, and necessary for the economic development of, the country.

Opinion in South Africa during the months of December and January became more and more pronounced in favour of the scheme.

On the 28th of December 1903, Sir George Farrar, in the Legislative Council, carried a motion for the importation of unskilled labour by 22 to 4, and the Ordinance was finally passed on the 10th of February 1904.

The debates of the House of Commons in February roused among the Transvaal people a feeling of great irritation with the Home Government, still further exacerbated by what seemed to them an unjustifiable delay in sanctioning the Ordinance. Lord Milner's private letters at this time are full of lamentations over the delay. He telegraphs in March :

Distress is steadily increasing [details showing its extent follow]. As far as European community on Rand are concerned, opinion is practically unanimous. With the exception of certain trade societies, who have little influence even with the working men, there is no one left to oppose Asiatic labour. You have in favour of it the municipalities, the Chamber of Commerce, converted from a majority of 51 to 5 against, to a majority of 61 to

11 for ; the great body of white miners, the whole professional class, the various Christian Churches, and a unanimous Press. It should be borne in mind that imported labour is to be confined to the Rand. The white population of the Rand, some hundred thousand in number, are through every recognised organisation demanding it. A complete change of opinion within a twelvemonth is the strongest argument I know of . . . the bitterness caused here by the prospect of the vital interests of this British community being sacrificed to the ignorance of people at home played upon for party purposes, is intense.

Fresh definitions of slavery flourished in every Liberal speech. It was slavery not to allow a coolie to do skilled work, slavery to house, feed, and doctor him, slavery to insist upon his having a pass before leaving the property of the mine, slavery to repatriate him. In fact, as time after time it was shown that these exact provisions existed in Ordinances passed by Liberal Governments, the true doctrine on slavery had to be re-enunciated, and one point after the other became in its turn crucial and final. Alfred dealt with these criticisms in a House of Commons speech on the 21st of March. Having explained in detail the provisions of the Ordinance, he went on :

After the language we have heard used on the other side, it is scarcely credible that in British Guiana in 1894, at the time when right hon. gentlemen opposite were in power, an Ordinance was sanctioned and put in force, in which there was the obligation on the part of the Coolie to reside on the plantation of the person who employed him, and the obligation of working on that plantation. There is a penalty if the Coolie is absent without leave ; there is a penalty if anybody harbours the deserter ; and

differing from this contract and differing from the settled policy of this Ordinance, there is the ability on the part of the Governor of the Colony to transfer the labourer without his consent. There is another difference—the period of indenture of the Indian Coolie is five years, and this is three. Again another difference: it has been pointed out that at the end of the period of indenture in British Guiana and Trinidad, the Coolie is at liberty to remain in the country, while by this Ordinance he is to be repatriated at the expense of his employer. Is that a difference which is said to constitute slavery? Just observe what the absurdity of the position is. It is not slavery in one case, but is slavery in the other, because in the one case a man goes on living in a foreign country, and in another he is repatriated at the expense of his employer.

It is unnecessary to labour the point; whatever objections there may be to the importation of foreign labour, contracts freely entered into do not constitute slavery.

But the magic word Slavery had been uttered, and that was enough. No reasoning, no appeal to former legislation or to impartial judgment availed. The Government, through their Colonial Secretary, were guilty of barbarous cruelty, and were dragging the fair fame of the Empire as a whole into ignominy and contempt.

To all this Alfred presented a strong and unmoved resolution; the enterprise was difficult and hazardous; therefore, as would have happened in a smaller arena, it roused every faculty he possessed. Day after day he was pestered by questions aggressively hostile in intention, every enactment in the Ordinance was subjected to fierce

criticism, while many debates took place upon the principles involved.

Any one who should take the trouble to read through the speeches, delivered in the session of 1904, will be struck by the vigour and strength and essential fairness of his defence of an unpopular policy.

It was natural that Lord Milner should thank him, in the name of the Colony, 'for the magnificent fight you are making against this torrent of ignorance,' and that letters of encouragement and gratitude should come from representatives of the community for whose interests he was fighting. But even his staunchest opponents paid him their tribute of admiration. Winston Churchill, in a speech attacking not the policy, which in his heart he perhaps approved, but various details connected with the treatment of natives in the mines generally, stated that his right hon. friend 'had been called unexpectedly to occupy a great position, and that he had filled that position in a manner unexpected even by his friends, would not be contradicted by any one on either side of the House.'

Among Alfred's papers there is a letter from Major Seely, who has kindly given permission for its publication. Though it belongs chronologically to the following year, it shall be quoted in this connection.

29 CHESTER SQUARE,  
15th November 1906.

MY DEAR ALFRED,—I am constrained to write to you to-night, what I have many times wished to say to you.

Whenever we discuss the Chinese question you see at least one angry man opposite to you—myself.

Now, I am angry because each time it is brought home to me that no other man in the House of Commons could possibly have carried through the policy which I hate—you stand there the embodiment of everything which is good, and honest, and straightforward, and so you defeat us.

To-night was only a minor episode, but in the whole controversy I have learned to respect and admire you more than I can tell.

I write this because I could not say it to your face, and on no account acknowledge this letter.—Yours sincerely,

JOHN BERNARD SEELY.

On the 12th of March 1904 the Chinese Labour Ordinance was sanctioned, and on the 22nd of June the first batch of 1000 Coolies reached the Rand. This number was increased to 2000 by the end of the year, to 40,000 by the end of June 1905, and finally reached the total of 50,000.

The success of the experiment was immediate. The mines were at once able to use larger numbers of white men : Lord Milner stated that 7000 Chinese had entailed the employment of 1600 white workmen. As about half of these were married men, this meant a fresh access at that time to the British population of at least 3000 people. When the subsidiary industries are taken into account, that influx was certainly not less than 8000. All these were living under prosperous conditions, for, as Lord Milner stated, 'if a white workman in South Africa is employed at all, he gets better wages than anywhere else in the world.'



The business of reconstruction in the conquered country was pushed forward: public works, such as the making of roads, railways, irrigation on a large scale, the provision of water and light in the towns, all things necessary to the development of a new country, were now undertaken. With the revival of industry such local opposition as there had been to Chinese labour disappeared; the Boer leaders kept up a pretence of disapproval in view of possible political changes in England, but the white skilled worker, and the small shopkeeper, realised that the restriction placed on Chinese labour guaranteed them from Chinese competition.

In England, too, the agitation receded, and in the autumn of 1904 other more effective sticks were found with which to beat the Government. Alfred had almost a year of peace. But it was inevitable that difficulties in administration should arise. By the middle of 1905, as has been said, over 40,000 Chinese were established on the Rand: so far from their conditions of existence resembling slavery, they were in fact allowed too much liberty, and bad and violent characters had of course appeared in the midst of such a large body of men. Their good behaviour at first had caused the authorities to relax regulations too freely, and the result was some robberies and murders, certainly in no larger proportion than would have been the case if the labourers had been Kaffirs. But the light which beat upon the doings of the Chinese was fierce.

From the beginning Alfred, in concert with Lord Milner, had tried in every possible way to safeguard



the coolie against any tyranny or cruelty on the part of the white overseer. It came to his knowledge in the August of 1905, that permission had been given to the overseers in the mines, under certain conditions, to flog the coolies. This permission did not seem to have been abused to any serious extent, but it was entirely against the spirit and the letter of all his pledges to Parliament, and he took the matter terribly to heart. His misery over it during the weeks of holiday up in Scotland, generally so happy, was intense. When once he had made up his mind to state quite frankly what had occurred, and to publish the correspondence connected with the matter, he felt relieved. As it turned out, his action was not on this occasion misrepresented or misunderstood.

Before dealing with any other South African measures, the following quotation from one of his speeches, delivered on the 17th of February 1905, can be given :

I am now in a position to sum up the results. It has been alleged that a disastrous blow has been struck at white labour. The answer is that the figures show conclusively an increase in white labour. . . .

Within a few months a representative Constitution will be granted to the Transvaal. If the Government are wrong—I do not think hon. gentlemen opposite really believe they are—there will be an opportunity of correcting the mistakes; but hon. gentlemen opposite know that there will not be a voice raised in any representative assembly against an introduction of Chinese, regulated as it is with scrupulous care. . . . The Government has a right to complain that, though the arguments in this House have been temperate and in good faith, it is not

so in the country. When my hon. friends on the Ministerial side described from what they had seen, the health and comfort and sanitary conditions under which the Chinese were living on the Transvaal, there were loud cries of 'Agreed, agreed!' from the Opposition benches. Did they cry 'Agreed, agreed!' to that in the country? Why, they talked of slavery. . . . I hope none of them were responsible for one of the most infamous documents that exists in the world—a document that has been extensively circulated in the constituencies, and has probably misled thousands of voters—a picture representing Chinamen in chains with ghosts of dead British soldiers protesting. If a tittle of what has been said about the Chinese in the Transvaal were true, then . . . the only right and just and sincere attitude to take up is to say, if this is slavery, it ought to be swept away from that statute book, even if it has been passed by a self-governing Colony . . . it would be obvious that hon. gentlemen opposite must sweep away the unclean thing.

Before leaving this subject, it may be recorded that when the Liberal Government came into power in the following year, far from repealing the Ordinance at once, they allowed the Chinese experiment to continue, and in August 1908 re-enacted it for two years. That it was difficult for them to take any other course must be admitted, and Lord Elgin, who succeeded to the office of Colonial Secretary, publicly, in the House of Lords, disclaimed the use of the word slavery. But the word had already done the work expected from it by the Liberal party organisers in the 1906 election.

Mr. Chamberlain, speaking in the House of Commons on the 29th of July 1902 on Crown Colony government, stated with regard to the Transvaal

that His Majesty's Government 'should go on from that probably to substitute for the nominative element, an elective element, and after that nothing would separate us, but the circumstances of the time, from that full self-government which is, and always has been, our ultimate goal.' As early as May 1904 Lord Milner was urging the appointment of some form of representative government as a first step towards full responsible government, and in July Alfred telegraphed to him :

His Majesty's Government feel . . . that successive steps should be taken, ultimately leading to full self-government.

In July Alfred announced in the House of Commons that the Government had decided to give representative institutions to the Transvaal. He had already for many months been engaged upon the problem, and had drawn up a scheme, afterwards called the Lyttelton Constitution. This was intended only as a temporary measure to bridge over the time until full responsible government would be granted. The *Times History of the War* gives the following summary of the arrangements :

The framework of the Lyttelton Constitution was laid on broad and statesmanlike lines, the franchise was liberal, and at the same time fair between the two races. The principle of equal rights was consistently and logically applied in the distribution of seats. Though not granting complete self-government, the Constitution yet marked an advance which, considering the circumstances, was both bold and generous.

Alfred wrote of this to Bernard Holland :

HOUSE OF COMMONS,  
*8th May 1905.*

MY DEAR B. H.,—It is not necessary for me as a rule to say anything to you about the value which I set on the assistance you give me, but I may break through this reserve on the occasion of the promulgation of the Constitution. You know what I feel about it, and how largely I attribute the success which has greeted it to your large and liberal view of the matter, and your admirable gifts in expressing our common thoughts.

I like being under obligations to you, and wish that I could ever repay them. But come what may, we have together set some mark on the fabric of our time, and will, if we live, yet again as comrades, aim at some high pinnacle of the temple of destiny.—Ever your affectionate

A. L.

Later, when the Unionists left office, Liberal politicians made much of the extraordinary generosity of their Government in granting complete autonomy at once, and contrasted their action with the niggardly performance of the Unionists. To make this statement effective, it became necessary to imply that the Unionist Government meant the Lyttelton Constitution to be permanent. But this was not the case, as has been conclusively shown. The Constitution was promulgated under Letters Patent, but these were not despatched until after Lord Milner's departure in April 1905.

Lord Milner had refused to leave South Africa and go to the Colonial Office, in 1903, feeling that the work of reconstruction was not yet securely

built. He toiled indefatigably all through the year 1904, and the strain, coming on the top of his long years of effort, was telling on his health. He began to urge that his successor should be chosen. His wonderful administration had laid down the lines of development, the economic difficulty was solved, and a settlement of the constitutional question was in sight.

He wrote to Alfred privately on September the 12th, 1904 :

Selborne himself would, in my opinion, be absolutely the fittest man for the job, if you hunted the whole Empire through. Of old days when thinking, as of course I constantly did, of my successor, there were only two men whom I could contemplate with complete satisfaction—yourself and Selborne. Now you are out of the question and Selborne almost equally so, of course *not quite*. If there is the faintest chance of Selborne taking it, then I exultantly desist from all further suggestions. It would be an ideal solution, but I fear, like so many ideals, unattainable.

Lord Selborne, however, was urged to take up the task with vigour. He was at the time First Lord of the Admiralty, and it was distasteful to him to leave his post. But the call to carry on Lord Milner's work was a great one, and it was hoped that when the Liberals came into office again, they would trust his known impartiality and sagacity. In February 1905 he was therefore appointed, and he started for South Africa during the month of April.

Lord Selborne was at once occupied with various measures, such as registration, demarcation of con-



stituencies, and preparation for the new form of government which was to be inaugurated in a year's time. The question of the Orange River Colony exercised the minds of both the Secretary of State and the High Commissioner very greatly. The position of affairs was different from that in the Transvaal, and to grant representative Government there, was to hand over the country, and the British minority in it, to men who were still Britain's enemies. A scheme was elaborated which promised success, but none of the provisions in either case were ever put in force, as the Liberal Government upset all the preliminary work, and at once granted responsible government to both Colonies. This action, no doubt, relieved them of the worst of their difficulties over the Chinese question.

It was a gamble, and let it at once be admitted, a gamble which on the whole succeeded. But it was at most only an anticipation of the settled policy of the government of the Unionists, and not, as was constantly reiterated, an entirely new and generous idea of the Liberals. The question at issue was merely one of date.

It would be wearisome to go through all the various South African problems which occupied Alfred's mind during the months after Lord Milner's departure; such as the status of the British Indians, that of the Natives, and the question of the War Contribution from the Transvaal, a delicate and difficult matter, finally settled to the satisfaction of every one. Lord Selborne threw himself into the question of the Federation



of the Railways, feeling this to be a first step towards a consummation desired by all statesmen, of whatever party—the Union of the South African Colonies.

Perhaps the most important action which Alfred took in his two years of office was his attempt at founding a permanent Imperial Secretariat in London to prepare questions for discussion by the Colonial Conferences. A circular despatch, dated the 20th of April 1905, was sent to the governors of the self-governing colonies, asking them to confer with their Ministers and to furnish him with their views.

The circular set out the gradual development of the Colonial Conferences, from the first one in 1887 to the two next in 1899 and 1902, and the establishment then of Conferences to meet every four years. A definite suggestion was made, from which the following is an extract :

It is obvious that the Prime Ministers of the Colonies, when they come to London for these meetings, cannot remain there for long, on account of their important duties at home. It is therefore desirable that subjects which they may agree to discuss should be as much as possible prepared beforehand by a body on which they would be represented, and should be presented to them in as concise and clear a form, and with as much material for forming a judgment as possible.

This proposal was warmly approved by the South African, Australian, and New Zealand Governments. The Canadian Government looked at it with suspicion, fearing a weakening of complete self-government. But the seed was sown, and the gradual development

of the Union of the Empire carried a step forward. Without doubt this problem of the future government of the British Empire, now that its component parts have identified themselves with Great Britain in the life-and-death struggle of the great war, is the most important which has ever confronted the statesmen of any one race.

Outside South African affairs, matters during Alfred's years of office went smoothly, in spite of various difficulties, such as echoes of the Alaskan Arbitration and of the riots in Trinidad, and disputes about the Pearl Fisheries in Ceylon. A new Governor-General for Canada had to be appointed, and Alfred chose Lord Grey. This selection, it is unnecessary to state, was justified in the most brilliant way. On the eve of Lord Grey's departure, Lady Wantage gave a dinner party, to which we were bidden. Alfred made a charming and humorous speech; in it he expressed something of his own diffidence, and constant appreciation of the gifts and faculties of others. 'In the world of realities,' he said, 'I am only a pupil and follower of Albert Grey:—in the world of shadows, in which we all live, I am supposed to be his chief. But I am sure it will be as difficult for me to call him His Excellency as it would be ridiculous in him to call me Mr. Lyttelton.'

It was really one of the difficulties of the new Colonial Secretary's position, that he was on intimate and friendly terms with such a large number of people. He had to prove himself among intimates, and his great popularity, while it helped in some

ways, was a hindrance in others. 'Every one who comes here calls him Alfred,' said one of his Colonial Office secretaries.

Sir Charles Lucas, then Assistant Under Secretary of State, in a letter to me writes :

I am not, perhaps, very well qualified to speak of your husband's work at the Colonial Office, partly because I was so fond of him and so delighted to serve under him that I could not and cannot judge him and his work as dispassionately as if he had been a stranger to me when he came to the Office, and partly also because, while he was Secretary of State, my duties did not bring me into contact with him on the most important political questions which were to the front at the time.

In forming any estimate of his work as Secretary of State for the Colonies, it should always be borne in mind that he became Secretary of State at a time when party feeling was unusually bitter : that this party bitterness tended to focus upon the Colonial Office because it had been Mr. Chamberlain's office and the office directly concerned with the South African War ; that he succeeded in Mr. Chamberlain a Secretary of State of singular strength and personality ; that he succeeded him without ever having been in office before ; and that he only held office for a short time. Under these circumstances I think he was extraordinarily successful. I should say—simply carrying my memory back—that perhaps his best and most fruitful piece of work was a circular despatch to the Self-Governing Dominions written in April 1905, in which he pointed the way to the evolution of what is now the Imperial Conference. It is a despatch which no one who traces or reads the growth of Imperial Unity can ever leave out of sight.

Most of the great questions with which he had to deal had been handed on to him ; he had to take them up as he found them and carry them on. In dealing with questions which came into being for the first time, he had knowledge of the world, good judgment, high courage, legal training,

and a natural instinct as to what was at once right and practicable, all to guide him, and they did guide him.

He looked upon himself, I should say, at the Colonial Office, as the Captain of an Eleven, and all of us who served under him as his friends and colleagues. Most loyal of men himself, and relying implicitly on others' loyalty, giving us the utmost confidence, ready to take the fullest responsibility for whatever went amiss, and delighted to give credit to others for any good piece of work.

His interest in the work was intense, quite outside and beyond the interest of an ordinary party politician. I remember his telling me how he would think over the different questions that were coming up, at odd times, when walking in the streets, in hansom cabs and so forth. He evidently felt to the full the keen joy of dealing with an immense variety of living problems and an equal variety of living men.

My long experience in the Colonial Office taught me how much good or harm is done by personal sympathy or want of sympathy with those who come home from beyond the Seas. They may be citizens of the Self-Governing Dominions, they may be Crown Colony Officers from some out-of-the-way part of the world. If those whom they see at the Colonial Office appear to take little interest in what interests them, and to know little of where they have been and what they have done, the effect must be a sense of discouragement and disappointment. If, on the other hand, they find knowledge and interest and sympathy, appreciation of difficulties, and recognition of good work, then the Colonial Office is looked to with gratitude and confidence, and a visit to it stimulates to further good work. He brought the human element into official relations with the happiest results, and, may I say, for I remember noting it at the time, the opening of your house in Great College Street to small informal parties and gatherings contributed to the same end.

Alfred was convinced that nothing could help his work more than personal intercourse with as

large a number as possible of the people over whose public affairs he had, by virtue of his office, either some power or some influence. He made a point of seeing every one who came from the Colonies, or was in the Colonial Service, and that not merely in a formal way. Within the Office also he was in the habit of calling together the various officials who had written minutes on any important matter and consulting with them verbally. The efforts of the Victoria League, already referred to, received great encouragement from the new Colonial Secretary : he made arrangements by which, through the League, the arrival of distinguished visitors from the Colonies was communicated to a few people who undertook to direct hospitality. The desire to meet and to make friends was keen on both sides, it needed only to bring the hosts and the guests together. We did what we could ourselves, but we had only a small house in London ; we were, however, helped in the most spirited way by friends. The luncheon hour was the best moment for Alfred, and some people will remember the talks they had with him at this time, talks often fruitful in new ideas, better understanding and closer co-operation between those whose countries were separated by hundreds of miles ;—for visitors from the different parts of the Empire were invited to meet each other as well as people living in Great Britain.

He procured official and court recognition for many people hitherto passed over. It seems incredible, but it is a fact, that he was the first Minister who requested that the Agents-General for the



Colonies should be invited, with the Ambassadors and Ministers of other powers, to the court functions. A small thing, but the principle involved was not small.

These efforts were, of course, only an attempt to carry into the social sphere the great impulse towards Union between Great Britain and the Dominions, which had been given by Mr. Chamberlain's imagination and statesmanship. Hospitality is not now as one-sided as it used to be, and the warm and generous welcome always given by those in the Colonies to visitors from Great Britain is in some measure returned. Many causes have contributed to this, but among them may be placed the influence of Alfred Lyttelton.

Lord Selborne, in a private letter, writes of Alfred :

In the Cabinet he was very modest, too modest, about expressing his opinions, but his influence for peace and loyalty among his colleagues was great. In all Cabinets there is hot contention from time to time, and colleagues sometimes get personally estranged from each other.

Alfred stopped many of these contentions at an early stage, and when the split did come over the tariff question I think that his influence did much to soften the asperities inseparable from the parting of the ways.

It was during the last year of Mr. Balfour's ministry that Alfred had to face a formidable ordeal in the House of Commons. He had been deputed to speak in a fiscal-policy debate, but when he rose he was met by a storm of protest. The Opposition were determined that Mr. Balfour alone should be heard. For a whole hour he stood at the table, with perfect



composure and good temper; he refused to be howled down, waited patiently, and in every lull spoke a few sentences. It was a humiliating scene, and did not redound to the credit of those who howled.

Alfred's unique popularity was not injured by the inevitable criticism levelled at the holder of any public position. During the long and acrimonious debates about Chinese labour, when he spoke with great force and plainness, he always preserved his impartiality and his power of sympathy. He felt deeply the hypocrisy and unfairness of much of the agitation, and all his natural combativeness was aroused. But he was quick to seize on any genuine feeling, and to recognise ability and sincerity. He had a very sure touch with people. An instance of this occurred during one of the most violent of the Chinese-labour debates. The controversy turned upon whether white men would or would not work side by side with blacks. Mr. John Burns declared that there was no difficulty and that he himself had done so. 'Yes,' said Alfred at once, 'but I venture to assert that if the Hon. Member worked with ten blacks it was as Captain of the Eleven.' Mr. John Burns laughed assent. 'You had me there, Lyttelton,' he said afterwards.

Alfred formed a high opinion of Mr. Herbert Samuel's ability, and said his speeches on the question were far the best made by his opponents, and showed real knowledge and study of the subject.

On the lighter side of controversy the caricatures

were a joy to Alfred. He was represented as a Chinaman in all sorts of attitudes. The black poodle, successor to 'Poll,' who always accompanied him to the Colonial Office, became well known and himself once figured as a Chinese animal. His name was Fisc, because he was born in the year when Mr. Chamberlain started the Tariff Reform policy, but his politics were personal. He followed his master religiously, and when he was foiled by a Cabinet meeting, would lie on the table in Alfred's Colonial Office room till his return.

On the last day of December 1904, Alfred wrote the following letter to Bernard Holland :

COLONIAL OFFICE, 31st December 1904.

DEAR OLD FRIEND,—So the year is just passing. On several other occasions you have had a considerable say on great affairs, but in Transvaal Concessions we together wrought, and in 1904 at any rate, whatever happens to us, we may say that we lived in the main stream.

Probably you intuitively guessed with what infinite doubts I embarked on the unknown routes of high politics, and how sceptical I was of making any success therein. I still feel them—but confront them now without despondency, perceiving that intense interest and zeal and courage may make headway against intellectual subtleties. I want to say once again what an indescribable support and comfort you have been to me, how invaluable your pen, what a ripe judgment you have shown in large affairs—how delicious it has been to be able by squashing that bulb on my table at any moment to have a talk with you, to laugh—to regain proportion and to look into the future hopefully, to thresh out ideas and correct impressions with your dear old aloof mind. No one can take away these twelve months whatever may happen to us. . . . Ever your affectionate

A. L.

On the 26th of February 1905 the following telegram was sent to the Governor-General of Canada. It has almost a prophetic ring, and for that reason shall be given here as a finish to this account of Alfred Lyttelton's term of office.

I am glad to hear that you are giving a dinner on Paardeberg day to all officers who served in South Africa. I hope and believe that for all time, and if need be against mightier foes, Canadian soldiers will fight side by side with those of the mother country in defence of the safety and the honour of the Empire.

We who are still alive know how that hope has been fulfilled.





*Photo: Argent Archer*

ARTHUR BALFOUR AND ALFRED AT RANELAGH  
APRIL 1905

## CHAPTER II

### GENERAL ELECTION

1906

An example to us all, not of lamed misery, helpless spiritual bewilderment and sprawling despair, or of any kind of *drown-age* in the foul welter of our so-called religions and other controversies and confusions ; but of a swift and valiant vanquisher of all these ; a noble assister of himself as worker and speaker in spite of all these. Continually so far as he went he was a teacher by act and word of hope, clearness, activity, veracity, and human courage and nobleness ; the preacher of a good gospel to all men, not of a bad to any man.—Carlyle's *Life of Sterling*.

MR. BALFOUR resigned office in December 1905. For some months Alfred had been in favour of this course for general reasons, which outweighed his desire to have a share in solving the South African problems. Mr. Chamberlain was preaching Tariff Reform all over the country, and no one quite knew how far Mr. Balfour was prepared to lead the party or how far the party was prepared to go. The position was difficult and delicate. Alfred was therefore glad of the decision, but the close of a chapter is always rather melancholy, and the Colonial Office work had absorbed his every thought. He writes to Lavinia who had sent him a word of sympathy :

COLONIAL OFFICE,  
5th of December 1905.

MY DEAREST LAVINIA,—It was very dear of you to write me such a letter. Of course there have been heavy trials here—and the Government of the Transvaal have made some serious mistakes of which I have not heard the end in



administering the Chinese Ordinance. But even if politics were to end with me now (and I still believe they are to be the main work of the rest of my life), I should feel that I had passed a great two years.

It is rather melancholy to wind up, but the Election and all its horrors will soon be on us to take all else out of one's head. After that there will be more leisure—indeed perhaps too much.—Your loving  
A. L.

A Liberal Government was formed under Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and early in January 1906 the General Election followed.

Alfred Lyttelton had a severe time of it. The discreditable campaign of misrepresentation and slander had been well organised; every speaker denounced slavery—an easy task—and the electorate did not stop to consider whether the Chinese ordinance were indeed slavery, but lashed itself into a state of virtuous indignation with a British Government which actually, they were told, instituted an abomination they had imagined banished for ever from this world. Every hoarding flamed with pictures of Chinamen in chains, Chinamen being flogged, Chinamen being kicked. Alfred, who was the protagonist of slavery in the eyes of the populace, suffered an avalanche of abuse; his own supporters stood firm, but the large fluctuating vote went against him, as against almost every Unionist in the country. In any case, the party had no chance of winning at the polls. As early as April 1904 Alfred had written to Lord Milner:

A dissolution is to be expected next spring, when almost inevitably we shall be beaten. When the other side come in they will be confronted with their dishonest and in-

sincere utterances about Chinese labour by the ignorant and sincere of their followers, and I am convinced that they will extricate themselves from a painful dilemma, by granting self-government to the New Colonies.

Undoubtedly the appeal made to the ignorant but generous love of an ideal of freedom, and the fears and jealousy of labour, lest, as they were often told, Chinese slaves should be introduced into England, was directly responsible for the size of the victory. Seat after seat which had been a Unionist stronghold was lost, and Alfred's constituency, in which the Chinese campaign was at its worst, of course elected the Liberal candidate.

The sitting member was pelted with stones, spat upon and abused. Mr. Balfour had been howled down by the Liberals, so the Unionists would not hear Mr. Lloyd George; after this no one was ever heard at all, and it was not by oratory that the election was either won or lost in Leamington and Warwick.

We had taken a little house to which the children came down, only to witness their father's discomfiture. There was the usual farewell speech to be made, and much windy optimism and noisy affection was expressed, but the quieter men knew that they were finally parting with their member, and that the day of the Unionist party was over for some years.

The next few months were depressing; Alfred missed the House of Commons, and he was undecided whether to take up his work at the Bar again. Money questions were urgent, and for a moment his life seemed rather in disruption. But

it was only for a moment. The most difficult decision was about his legal career. Perhaps if I had believed, as Alfred declared, that there would be no change of Government for ten years or more, I should have urged his return to the Bar ; but my chief desire was that he should not overwork, and that his life should be reasonably clear of other claims, so that he could give his mind to all the problems of the time. It was our habit as well as our theory of life together, that each should be free to make his own decisions without interference from the other. I stood aside therefore ; he hesitated for some days, but at last one morning the temptation to go back to his chambers came in a tangible shape. He was in bed when quite early his clerk arrived with a fat brief which had a large fee marked outside it. Alfred handled it for some moments—he loved his profession—and then he simply said to the servant, ‘ Tell the clerk to return it,’ and so it was done.

Lavinia wrote to him on his birthday, February the 7th, sending him a book ; and he replied :

16 GREAT COLLEGE STREET, WESTMINSTER,  
*Feb. 9, 1906.*

DEAREST LAVINIA,—It was dear of you to remember me, for indeed 49 is not a romantic point of time, though as yet it is only rarely and when I am in other respects down that I feel even middle-aged. Already I feel that it is a great privilege to be myself, and really for the last five years that privilege has only been fitfully enjoyed. And then, too, it is a comfort to have a respite from the organised quarrels of parties, and to have good chance to cultivate the pacific temper and to resume the judicial mind under less difficulty.

All these good moods are furthered by coming under your roof, and by talk with your beloved bishop from whose presence no one ever comes out without feeling better.

I will write again, dear, when I have read some more of the book which I love to possess and to feel that you gave it me. With too thanks.—Your loving A. L.

It was not long before Alfred began to get work as an arbitrator, for which he was peculiarly well suited. He was also made a director of the London and Westminster Bank, now the London, County and Westminster, and in 1908 a director of the Bank of Australasia. He had for many years been connected with the Law Debenture Corporation and Law Union Insurance Company,<sup>1</sup> and enjoyed the fresh insight which these new posts gave him into business matters.

In June 1906 came the offer of a seat—St. George's, Hanover Square. The election was uncontested, Colonel the Hon. Heneage Legge resigning in his favour, and he was once more a Member of Parliament.

He writes to Lucy Cavendish :

HOUSE OF COMMONS,  
25 June 1906.

DEAREST OLD SISTER,—Thanks too times for the kind words. I don't think you need fear the 'true blue' of St. George's. . . . I had a turn this afternoon in this dear old place, and very much enjoyed it ; I can tell you, after three years of Chinese, it is not bad fun finding the open sea of less difficult subjects again.

<sup>1</sup> Ever since 1886 Alfred had been a director of the Crown Life Office. In 1890 an amalgamation took place with the Law Union Insurance Company, and in 1908 he was appointed chairman, and carried through a further amalgamation with the Rock Life Office in 1908. He remained chairman of the combined company called the Law Union and Rock Insurance Company till his death.

## CHAPTER III

### LETTERS

1906

. . . La différence est notable du mystère qui précède ce que nous ignorons au mystère qui suit ce que nous avons appris. Il semble qu'il y ait beaucoup de tristesses dans le premier ; c'est qu'elles s'y trouvent à l'étroit et s'accumulent toutes sur deux ou trois éminences trop proches. Il semble qu'il y en ait bien moins dans le second ; c'est que sa surface est plus vaste, et qu'aux grands horizons les tristesses les plus grandes prennent la forme d'espoirs.—MAETERLINCK.

ALFRED no longer had the fixed holidays which he called the glory of the legal profession, and the grey stone house at Gullane was too far away. His work as an arbitrator and at the bank kept him tied to the South for the greater part of the year, and he began to feel that a more accessible country home was a desirable thing. But another reason also influenced him to sell the house in which so many happy days had been spent. It was placed in the midst of golf links : North Berwick, Muirfield, Gullane, Luffness, Kilspindie, to say nothing of the private links at Archerfield. High Walls itself was almost on the first tee at Muirfield, so a continual stream of people through the house was inevitable. Rural quiet was not to be attained, and I found life there even more exhausting than in London. It was a wrench to sell the place, with its garden full of roses, the glorious stretch of sea, the fine air, but to keep up a large house

for the sake of six weeks in the year seemed extravagant. In 1906 some one wanted to buy it, and we made up our minds to accept the offer if it were put forward. I was tired out and felt that I must get away somewhere by myself and rest. A doctor advised me to try the treatment at Ems, and after a happy August I started on almost the last day of our boy's holidays, and was seen off at the station in the dark by Alfred, Oliver, Mary, and the poodle Fisc. Mary rather shyly put what she called some lucky stones into the pocket of my coat, precious stones 'abraded by the beach.' Oliver was unhappy over the wane of the holidays; Alfred rather forlorn; and I wondered suddenly why I was going, and would have given the world to turn back. But it was too late for that. Fisc pulled at his leash to try and jump into the train, and brought Mary down with a tremendous thud; her knee was bleeding, but she pulled herself up bravely and smiled and waved good-bye as the train swept into the night. I remember how I cried; it was absurd, for the parting was only for a week or two, but the accident, the poor little stones, Oliver and Alfred, pulled at my heart-strings. And are not all good-byes shadows of the great one?

HIGH WALLS, GULLANE, N.B.,  
*12th September 1906.*

It was a bad moment because, though it is only three weeks, the night and the passage and the solitudes seemed to compare ill with the sun and the roses and the children.

Mary's knee had a big bruise on it. I do think it extraordinarily plucky of her to have made no more of it. I heard the bone hit the stones and it must have hurt. . . .



It looks like business (the selling of High Walls) and is very sad, but I think is clearly right. I have been so hustled making golf and all other arrangements, that there has never been a moment for the reading in the morning. Everything that you do . . . comes on me now, and I have the men, caddies, telegrams, and I know not what besides. But the party goes with great success. . . . Oliver played really beautifully and in 1908, if I live, will beat me. It gives me a kind of sweet anguish to feel how I miss you, how I long to talk to you and consult you, and at almost every moment feel the gap. Get health and peace, and come back quite well. It was too delicious of Mary and the little stony symbols.

LONDON, 18th September 1906.

It has been very sweet with Oliver; in that sense at any rate it is quite good that I should have the tender responsibilities that you discharge. . . .

We left on the most superb Northern morning, the sky and the sea as blue as Italy's, and the dew sparkling on the roses. We talked sensibly of our loss and gains, and how we would try and make up for the delicious six weeks for which we have paid so dear. It was also good for me to have some few days' experience of the *va-et-vient*, and to realise more what you have to endure. We were delightfully intimate and cosy all the journey. Oliver was a little shiny in the eyes at saying farewell to Herbert, who gave him £1, and I was so when a little white glove, obviously Mary's, fell creased and with a strong smell of indiarubber, out of Oliver's mackintosh, put there like your stones.

Oliver absolutely bounded in his seat with joy and excitement at Raffles which really, seen with him, was quite splendid. . . . Love me always . . . and don't forget me.

He wrote to Oliver from Hutton Castle :

MY DEAR NOLL,—It was very good to get your letter. I like the way you take interest in all things, from motor cars and mathematics to history and golf and football. This is a great secret of life, and I like to think that neither

at Westminster<sup>1</sup> nor Eton will you ever allow any one to argue you out of so good a state of mind and opinion.

We got here yesterday 111 brace (5 guns), to-day 75 (4 guns), both days a lot of hares and some pheasants, beautiful shooting, but wanted you to mark and load and talk between the drives. I shall either get you a new gun when you begin or keep my dear old Purdey's for you.

Bless you, old boy.—Your affectionate

A. LYTTELTON.

On the 20th of September, from Hyndford House, North Berwick, Mr. Frank Tennant's house :

Just back from London. Everything went beautifully with Oliver till just the end. He came and counted the cash with me at the Bank, and bought a bag with me at the Stores, and finally we dined together (very grown up) at Boodles' old-fashioned club. And no one could have been a more darling little comrade and playmate. But on the stairs when I pressed his little allowance into his hand and gave him a secret kiss, he burst into tears, and seeing him off into the night in a hansom—a very desolate little figure—brought all the mother to my eyes. Mark<sup>2</sup> and Edward<sup>3</sup> sobbed all the night before leaving here, but I shall long think how sweet it was of Oliver after High Walls and you had been got over, to mind so much leaving his 'pore old dad.' The 8.45 Scotch Express was wrecked at Grantham, at least ten killed—and I came by the 11.45. It gives one a queer feeling to be so near, though I never heard of the accident till I arrived at Drem the next morning.

I have arranged possession (of High Walls) to be given at the New Year. . . . Everything, as luck has it, looking and feeling exquisite here—but we may always feel that we can get three weeks in October whenever we like. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Oliver went to Westminster School as a day boy for a year before going to Eton.

<sup>2</sup> Mark Tennant, killed on September 16, 1916, on the Somme.

<sup>3</sup> Captain Edward Tennant, Scots Guards, temporary Major and Wing Commander R.F.C.

I had seen in the *Times* at Ems that Alfred was travelling to Scotland on the night of the accident ; also that the bodies of many of the victims could not at present be identified. I knew too that as Alfred was not going straight home, there was room for a great deal of delay before the truth could be known. I went through a few hours of acute fear. As the time drew near for the train which brought people from England, I was in a fever expecting to see some one from home come to break the news to me. But I had of course telegraphed, and in the afternoon got an answer saying that all was well. The relief enabled me to be very angry at once, and I wrote home indignant that no one had thought of telegraphing. I had the following reply :

HIGH WALLS, GULLANE, N.B.,  
23rd September 1906.

. . . First and foremost deep sorrow for your suffering, which I read of with anguish in May's<sup>1</sup> letter. It was extraordinarily bad luck that my name should have been put in the papers as travelling on that night. There was not a soul on the platform, and Elgin managed to go by the same train without notice. . . . Did you really think you had lost me ? You wouldn't have lost other than a very turbulent comrade. . . .

One more letter shall be given here showing how beneath all our happy intercourse Alfred was careful of the deeper contact :

HIGH WALLS, GULLANE, N.B.,  
16th September 1906.

You said you had not been up to the mark socially or spiritually. . . . You have far more to complain of me.

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Jack Talbot, my sister.

I *have* felt a little lately that we have been slipping away from some dear and intimate solemnities—much seldomer at Communion together, no reading, or little of it, of the deeper things of the spirit. I think we need to review and stand back from our position ; it is demoralising not to face it, and to let things slide. If we really are losing faith in the sincerity of the observances it is better to acknowledge it than to drift, and sometimes I think or guess that you conform because of me, and with an unprofessed agnosticism which is very like me in many moments of my life. I find this very difficult to write about, because my own attitude is so difficult to define. Only of this I feel sure, that the Christian faith is that which stands for all those aspirations for good—few indeed enough—which lighten my path in this tough world. You will understand that I write because of my desire to have no secrets in these fundamentals, and because of the children who so easily will lose reverence if we grow perfunctory.

To this I sent a long reply, far too long to quote here, but a short extract can be given because it bears upon our relationship to one another.

I am so glad you wrote upon the other subject . . . it is always rather difficult to speak about these deeper things ; when one is much together the moment often seems remote. But your letter shows me what a mistake it is not to hold converse more, and I blame myself, for I see you do not realise my present position. What you say about my conforming because of you, and of my unprofessed agnosticism, *was* profoundly true, only that conformity always to me had an element of love and faith that some of these observances might mean more. (I'm afraid you are in for a fearfully long letter.) But now my attitude is quite a different one. The world of the spirit, the Communion with something we call God is a living and vital reality to me ; the very breath of my being. I could not endure life without it.

The letter goes on to trace a slow evolution of ideas, and sums up :

It has all come very gradually ; I think I have always had desire but nothing more. Then came the strange experience by Antony's body, which really was the primary cause of all that followed afterwards. . . .

I tried to describe :

. . . through the dark and the silence comes a sudden overwhelming sense of presence—a trembling of the dark into light—of the silence into sound and you are not alone, and you know that at your need you will never be alone again. . . . Nothing could ever explain away these things once they have been felt . . . but it is hopeless to try and convey them to others. Something has been touched which is not the mind or the brain and it becomes untranslatable. . . . My love for you, and I believe yours for me, has burned so steadfastly and unwaveringly, that I have always supposed we were close behind words ; indeed I felt close to you—but from your letter I see you did not really quite know me—and equally I did not quite know you.

Alfred had written on the 18th of September from London :

I have felt uneasy about my letter of Sunday because everything looks so different on paper without looks and tones. But you will read it as if my cheek were against yours, dearest, and in the loving confidence we have felt for fourteen years. . . .

And later when he had received mine :

I am very grateful for the long and wonderfully interesting letter. I won't write about it now, but it is the greatest relief to have it—nor does it reveal anything of which I was not at any rate fairly sure in my own mind *negatively*, while many additions are made *positively* to my deepest thought of you.

## CHAPTER IV

### LOSS

1907

This is a sacred city, built of marvellous earth,  
Life was lived nobly here to give such beauty birth,  
Beauty was in this brain and in this eager hand,  
Death is so blind and dumb, Death does not understand.

Death drifts the brain with dust and soils the young limb's glory,  
Death makes justice a dream, and strength, a traveller's story ;  
Death drives the lovely soul to wander under the sky,  
Death opens unknown doors. It is most grand to die.

JOHN MASEFIELD.

THE year 1907 was a sad one. Early in January Kathleen Lyttelton died suddenly, four years after her husband. Arthur Lyttelton had endured some months of painful illness before he went, and he had been able to throw off the reserve which generally hid him, and speak to those about him, straight from his deeper self. Alfred had one or two talks with him, and was moved by his brother's calm faith. 'He showed,' wrote Alfred to Bernard Holland, 'a truly noble fortitude and serenity throughout.' 'It is only a soul that has never loved God,' Arthur said, 'that has to go out bleak and solitary.' Kathleen also showed a 'noble fortitude and serenity'—but the spring of her existence here was broken, although the years she spent alone were full of work and interest. Her life was irradiated by a deep mystical sense which, while it made complete submission possible,



gave her a vision of hope and joy not seized before. She said that she would not, if she could, exchange her present relation with Arthur for that which had been ; a strange avowal, made only to one or two who would not misunderstand. She went in the plenitude of her powers, without any protracted suffering ; she went in the full light of her faith, and the mourning was not so much for her as for those she had left. . . . Of her two sons one was already in the Navy, and one just about to enter the Army. But her daughter Margaret was left alone. It was arranged that she should go and live with her aunt, Lady Frederick Cavendish.

Alfred wrote to Lucy :

BROOKS'S, ST. JAMES'S STREET,  
*8th of March 1907.*

DEAREST LUCY,—The 'Hansards' <sup>1</sup> duly arrived and are stored for the moment, pending the making of bookcases in the hall. I do trust that I was not forward in begging for them ; I would not have dreamt of doing so had I not heard that you were sending them away in any event from their old places to make room for Margaret's possessions.

And indeed they give me such an intimate relation to dear Freddy, and are so identified with him, that you will, I hope, know how I love to have them. You will be consoled for my being where I am in politics when you realise that there are no Tories now, and that there is, I believe, scarcely anything which Freddy believed in that I do not subscribe to. Indeed I think that he would have been at first startled by such measures as the later Irish Land Bill which we prepared and the Workmen's Compensation Bill. Had he lived he would have infused his comrades with his elevation, his enthusiastic sympathies, and his robust good

<sup>1</sup> They had belonged to Lord Frederick Cavendish.

sense. I never come to you without thinking of him and longing that he were here. Thanks 100 times, dear old sister.—Your loving  
A. L.

In March Christopher Balfour fell grievously ill, his sickness induced, it was said, by the hardships he had undergone during the Ladysmith siege. All through the summer he wasted away, and his family were just giving up hope when a fresh calamity overtook them. Regie, my youngest brother, died quite unexpectedly. Alfred wrote of him to Lucy :

28th July 1907.

It was very dear of you to write. I have seen and had a long talk with poor Mrs. Regie, and thought of you and used all the comforts which you have given me by word and example from your own griefs. The Roman Catholics are, I think, very good at these times. And she has shown marvellous courage and calmness in the crushing tragedy which has befallen her. Wilfred Ward very kindly wrote a charming notice of him in the *Times*. Certainly when he came with me to Newfoundland, I took away an impression, after two months, of a most attractive and charming personality, a deeply religious nature, and a brilliant intellect.

A month later the end was to come for Christopher also. One of the trials of his long illness, to those with him, was the doctor's advice that he should not be told that his brother was dead. He made a tremendous struggle for life, but when it was broken to him that there was no hope, he took it bravely. He was at last allowed to hear of his brother's death. He described how for three or four weeks he had been conscious of some presence with him always; a man, but he could not tell who it was. 'He never leaves me,' Christopher said;

‘it is an inexpressible comfort . . . to show you how close he is, I don’t know sometimes if it’s my hand or his hand under my cheek.’

Alfred wrote :

LONDON.

I opened the sad letter which so touchingly and simply describes the pathetic life of the little family at Sherrards.<sup>1</sup> I feel so helpless in face of it all, and yet I cannot but feel some relief that Christopher now knows, and that the gallant but hopeless struggle with the terrible foe need not be maintained.

In order to be near my brother I spent the last two or three weeks of his life at Hatfield. I sent the children up to Scotland with their father, to Mrs. Frank Tennant at North Berwick, on their way to Archerfield, a place which Alfred and Herbert Gladstone had taken together for August and September.

Alfred wrote :

HYNDFORD HOUSE,  
NORTH BERWICK, *29th August 1907.*

It was no surprise. Indeed I thought once or twice during my last talk with him that he was on the point of death, though his mind was perfectly clear. To stretch him out longer on the rack of this tough world would have been more sorrowful. I have nothing but the most affectionate and gentle memory of our two last long interviews, and I love to think that I had them and can feel with all of you as I do. . . .

Mary is in bed, she was very dear and spirited and all went well on the journey. . . . They received us with delicious cordiality, and we have beautiful rooms and the library to ourselves. I am hoping you may be able to

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Robert Balfour’s house in Hertfordshire in which Christopher died.

come up Saturday night or Sunday. I long to hold your dear hand. . . .

And again he wrote the same day :

HYNDFORD HOUSE,  
29th August 1907.

Mary is blooming to-day after about twelve hours' sleep, but Annie found her up with Kakoo<sup>1</sup> with some tears on her dear little face thinking of you and all you have been through. Nothing can exceed the sadness of the end, however we may even hope for it, of the young. Poor dear little Christopher. I don't wonder at any woman becoming bound up in him. He had all the attraction of simple and rather imperious and hot characters, and that kind of expectation of the best in life which Gwendolen had in Daniel Deronda. He ought to have had £20,000 a year, and would have done brave justice to it all. . . . We all talked of you very tenderly as you vanished from our sight that sad evening, and each thought you the bravest and dearest. We have a closeness in our little circle which perhaps is hardly known outside, but how heavenly it would have been to have kept Antony, and what a darling little comrade he would have been to all four of us . . . we miss you hourly.

Lady Louisa Egerton died in September. Alfred always had a great affection for her, dating from the days when he and Edward as little schoolboys went to stay at Holker with the old Duke of Devonshire, their brother-in-law's father. He wrote to Lucy :

ARCHERFIELD HOUSE, DIRLETON, R.S.O.,  
SCOTLAND, 23rd of September 1907.

DEAREST OLD SISTER,—This must be an irreparable loss to you, and I can feel deeply with as well as for you. For more than forty years I had as a most prized possession dear Lady Loo's affection, and with it the most excellent wisdom,

<sup>1</sup> Kathleen Tennant, now Lady Granby.

kindness and true and gentle sincerity. I know what she has ever been to you, of course, nearer much than to me—but even to me the sense of gap and loss is very great. She had all the qualities of her family, and every year gave her, as it does to all great and noble characters, more breadth and loving kindness. Her memory will be ever sweet to me, and her example one which we may all try at a distance to imitate.—Ever your affectionate A. L.

These experiences, though some of them meant more actual sorrow for others than for him, served to increase in Alfred a certain detachment from the world which was latent in him always. He constantly spoke of his own death, of the end drawing near, not with any morbidity but as a fact. He seemed forewarned that he was not to know old age.

## CHAPTER V

### GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

1906-1910

It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion ; it is easy in solitude to live after our own ; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.—EMERSON.

As I went down to Dymchurch wall,  
I heard the South sing o'er the land ;  
I saw the yellow sunlight fall  
On knolls where Norman churches stand.

And ringing shrilly taut and lithe,  
Within the wind a core of sound,  
The wire from Romney town to Hythe,  
Alone it's airy journey wound.

J. DAVIDSON.

AFTER he sold High Walls, Alfred made up his mind that he wished to have a country home somewhere within reach of Rye. Years before, in 1895, he and Arthur Balfour, the first captain of the then new golf links, had hired between them a little place in the old town, where I kept house for them. Alfred loved that countryside, and very nearly bought a cottage then and there. Now, when Scotland had to be abandoned, his thoughts turned to the lovely Sussex country, and the level fields of Romney Marsh. I scoured the district in a hired motor, and by luck came upon the old Rectory house of Wittersham, which was not in the market, but which had just passed into the hands of a new



rector, who had not yet moved into it. The house was a burden to the living, being far too large, and after some negotiations Alfred bought it with a few acres of land.

A plain red-brick Georgian building—six sitting-rooms opening one out of the other, on the plan, though not of the size, of large country houses of the period; the whole place in a state of great disrepair, without any modern comforts; some fine trees, the possibilities of a charming garden, and a view over the rolling country—such was Alfred's new possession. A whole year and a half was spent in getting it into order, and the family could not move into it until the summer of 1908. Once settled in, Alfred found he had never loved any place of his own as much. He came back to it time after time with a sense of joy; hardly a day passed, when he was there, without his saying something about his delight in the house. He loved the village life, and the contact with the people in it; more and more he felt the longing to withdraw from the stress and strain of London and politics. He would plan a tranquil old age for himself and his wife; he was to take up gardening and country pursuits, and with books and a few outside duties, the days would pass. I used to laugh and say he would never be old enough to stop in one place for long, and I did not believe in his gardening aspirations. Once he and Oliver determined to dig in the garden, and were set to clear a plot of ground of a weed called fathen. After an hour they both reappeared, quite exhausted, and





GARDEN FRONT OF WITTERSHAM HOUSE



THE LIBRARY, SHOWING ALFRED'S CHAIR

complaining bitterly of the foul smell. They never gardened again. Golf was their amusement, and many happy days were spent down at the sea.

All sorts of people came to stay at Wittersham, and Alfred enjoyed having his friends about him, and giving them long days on the links. In the evening there would sometimes be part-singing, for he loved to go through old favourites, and stumble through new music, and among our friends and relations were many who could read at sight. Often, too, he would play the piano himself. He had a lovely touch and a sense of phrase; it was always an artistic pleasure to listen to him, though he was never able to practise or keep up his little repertoire. He read a great deal whenever he was at Wittersham, in his own room, or in the library with its book-lined walls; he hired some rough shooting, and he and his boy with one or two neighbours used to walk after the rather rare partridges; he tried to take a part in local affairs, read the lessons in the old church, contributed to its restoration, and just before he died was planning to supply the village with water. He had only five years in this house, but he had the feeling always that it was his real home.

The impression he made upon people at this time was of a man still young in years, alert, with his past flowing through him to his future; bright hopes about him as well as tender memories; and the broad generous sympathy, so often mentioned, helping him to understand completely the world in which he moved.

A friend wrote of him :

Perhaps the keynote of his character was sympathy—that was complete and widely extended. Difference in age was no bar to it. He seemed to be the natural friend of all generations, and was constantly claimed as such. It is difficult to be very good and very urbane, but Alfred Lyttelton was both to a supreme degree that frees the words from priggish and trivial associations. Why, he might almost have been called the public helper had such a post existed. The full revelation of such a nature is not made except in the closest relationship of life, but what friends could share of his home's intimate atmosphere was singularly precious to them. There, perhaps more than anywhere else, the talk was stimulating and enriching, and he caused this to be so wherever he went and without an effort. His presence was like a sunny wind.

No one ever revelled in social intercourse more than Alfred. It was with difficulty that he said no to any invitation, which did not clash with his work—that was always put first. During the greater part of the year he spent every Sunday out of London, staying at houses like Panshanger and Wrest with Lord and Lady Cowper; Hatfield, with the Salisburys; Taplow Court, with the Desboroughs; Esher, the beautiful French house belonging to Sir Edgar Vincent; Tring, with Lord and Lady Rothschild; Terling Place, Lord Rayleigh's home, and many others. He had a little cottage also at Woking to which he used to retreat. In the autumn he always paid several Scotch visits, though he rarely missed a week's grouse-driving on the Bolton moors first. They were glorious days at Bolton Abbey; the men used to start early in the morning, riding ponies and galloping off along the



green valley to the rolling hills. We followed afterwards either on foot, or in carriages as far as possible, and then walked for miles over the heather till we joined the men, often not till past three o'clock, for luncheon. I enjoyed sitting with Alfred in his butt, and watching the moor till it became alive with the driven birds—the packs flying low, settling, and then rising again till at last they were near enough to shoot. Deer-stalking too he delighted in. I was out with him once at Invermark, a forest rented by Lord Dudley, on a day when the valleys were filled with swirling vapour which closed us in and shut out all possibilities of spying. Suddenly out of the mist, only six feet from us, there loomed a huge stag—it stopped for one second and then with a quick bound was gone away into the mist again. Alfred was too overcome by the majesty of the great beast to shoot straight. I could not regret this, especially as later in the day he succeeded in getting a Royal whose horns hang in the hall at Wittersham with his East African heads.

Much as he loved sport of this kind he really enjoyed his golf almost as well. It was a delight to him to learn a new game in middle life, and a game which took him out into the air for a whole day at a time. He rarely missed playing two rounds on Saturdays often on his way to a Sunday visit.

In London he liked dining with his friends and entertaining them in his own house; when he could he went to concerts or to any place where he could hear music. The Temple Church, Westminster Abbey, St. Paul's he went to regularly,



and was only disappointed when the choir boys were away on a holiday. There was an annual visit to the Gerald Balfours at Woking, when Joachim played the violin and Donald Tovey the piano—long evenings they were of intense enjoyment. Several times we attended one or other of the great Choral Festivals, in Arthur Balfour's company, and Alfred would be roused by the music into a sort of ecstasy of vitality and enjoyment. There was one occasion, when we heard the B Minor Mass of Bach most superbly sung at Leeds, and he walked on air for many hours afterwards. Music stirred him more than any other form of art or beauty—it spoke in a language that he understood.

In all its manifold possibilities Alfred loved life itself, and his spirit of enjoyment was infectious. He always announced it, shared it as it were: 'How delightful this is!' he would say, looking round at two or three friends on the golf links; or sitting at home after dinner with a book, 'delicious to be alone'; or talking with his wife and children, 'dear little party.' Perhaps the secret of his joyousness, and his power of imparting it, was the fact that nothing ever grew stale to him. In his relations with others, quite easily and without effort, he made each meeting a special occasion. He had a way of opening his arms when he saw any one, as if he would like to take them right into his being. Yet he was by nature reserved, and had a great belief in silence, partly induced by his acute consciousness of the danger both for himself and

others of probing and investigating too much. He would quite simply turn away, and leave his thoughts unspoken.

In his home life this same freshness was a perpetual delight. I never came home from any absence, however short, without being met by a radiant welcome; he would talk with me alone just as eagerly as if he were talking to some one he only saw occasionally, and his fundamental modesty was so well known and understood between us that he was able to talk of his hopes, his little successes, his tributes, with complete frankness. The only self-deception he ever practised was in his belief that he was a man of quiet domestic tastes who asked nothing of life; as a fact he was rather luxurious; and he hardly realised how sheltered his existence had always been. He would describe the simplicity of his needs. 'All I want for dinner is soup, fish, and a bird,' as if he had reduced things to their lowest. He was, however, very abstemious, and neither ate nor drank much, always having a certain fear about his health, which I used to laugh at, but which was probably justified.

Youth and beauty and charm were irresistible to him. He had a few intimate women friends: Lady Ribblesdale, Lady Salisbury, Lady Ulrica Baring, Lady Elcho (now Lady Wemyss), Lady Desborough, Mrs. Leo Maxse, but for the most part he contented himself with enthusiastic appreciation.<sup>1</sup> He and I

<sup>1</sup> A sister-in-law declares of his feeling for women: We all thought he adored us, but he *didn't*. I often teased him and said to him, 'Your arm is round my waist, but your eye is on the clock.'

were specially fond of all Mrs. Frank Tennant's children ; one or other of her three girls were constantly with us, and he watched their development with intense interest.

Bernard Holland says of Alfred, ' He was a man whom one naturally desired to consult in any difficulty.' Certainly every kind of person, from bishops and ministers to old ladies and young girls, did consult him in all sorts of perplexities—money worries, quarrels, love affairs, business projects, books, negotiations : many were the ' tight places ' he helped people out of, and many the schemes he discarded or steered to success, for his judgment was remarkable.

Few people outside can have known the extent to which his kindness was exercised. Early in life he made one rule : he never recommended any one for a post, however humble, whom he did not know all about personally. This was soon recognised, with the result that he was almost as often asked to recommend people to posts as to find posts for people. Once he had taken a matter of this kind in hand, no trouble was too much for him ; he was lavish with money if that could help, but the gift of his time and thought was a stronger test of his unselfishness, for he cared about his leisure, his comfort and his pleasures.

He had a knack of getting his own way without seeming to, and possessed the gift of so manipulating people and, it may be said, himself, that neither he nor they always recognised his motives. This weakness had been pierced by his

family and was a constant source of amusement. His son, on the very last evening they were together, just before his illness, made him laugh over the trait. We were dining in the little Woking cottage, and Oliver, anxious to have some wine, says from the end of the table in a tone of mock fierceness, 'Can't you see mother wants the claret?' Alfred threw back his head and laughed whole-heartedly. His instructions how to stop some one who will talk in the train were characteristic. 'Pretend you are a little deaf—ask him to repeat what he has said several times, as the train makes such a noise—even the most confirmed yapper will be put off in time.' One can picture Alfred doing this, with a delightful smile, and an air of deep regret at the deprivation forced upon him. Yet it need hardly be said he was not in the least a humbug; his pleasure, his sympathy, or his regret was absolutely real, only if he wanted something he got it without hurting any one's feelings. This analysis is only worth while making, because he really had so few faults of character that these small idiosyncrasies stand out.

His friendships with men meant a great deal to him: he never forgot people or ceased to care for them, and it would be impossible for this reason to make any list; some of his alliances dated back to the very beginning of his manhood. Mr. Justice Lawrence, with whom he once shared chambers, he always went to on a matter requiring judgment. 'I'll ask Lawrie,' he would say; 'he's always right.' Bernard Holland, as his letters show, retained his

love to the end. Arthur Balfour was something more than friend to him ; there was a quality of romance and reverence in his feeling, joined with the delight of intimate companionship.

His letters reveal how much he shared experiences with his brothers and sisters ; how strong the old family influence always remained with him, personified in Lucy, Lavinia, and Mary Drew. When Sybella died on December the 9th, 1900, he knew how he should miss her warm uncritical love, the home sense which she gave him, the response to his affection.

Besides contemporaries such as George Curzon, St. John Brodrick, Lord Salisbury, Lord Robert Cecil, Evan Charteris, Lord Revelstoke, George Wyndham, and Bernard Holland, he loved many other older people, amongst them Lord James, Lord Wemyss, and in quite a special way Lady Wemyss, who died in 1896, physically over seventy, but mentally and spiritually always a young woman. Alfred and I stayed constantly at Gosford, for Lady Wemyss was loved at least as much by me. After she died Lord Wemyss married again, an old friend of ours, Miss Grace Blackburn, and the habit of going to Gosford each year was never broken.

There was growing up between him and his son a delightful comradeship, which the years would have deepened into friendship. Oliver inherited his father's fine spirits and keen enjoyment of life, and they happened to find each other amusing and interesting. Mary, too, was just beginning to join

the company—she shared his love of reading, and they had many happy times together over books.

The loss to his two children of his love and guidance in their early youth is incalculable, but his influence is with them still.

Through all his relations and intercourse with others, two characteristics stand out: his reverence for individuality and his tenderness; he very rarely tried to influence consciously, and was perhaps hardly aware that he often created a standard in people's minds, or that his opinion was quoted as a conclusive test in matters of honour and scrupulous fairness. 'What would Alfred Lyttelton say to this?' was—perhaps is—a constant thought with some people.

He was a man of the world in the ordinary sense of the term, but his judgment was not worldly. He was very tolerant, and saw good in every man, and perhaps for this reason, his generation identified him with all that was best in their time.

A younger man than himself, John Buchan sent to the *Spectator* a singularly felicitous account of the impression which his personality made on others. After saying that Alfred's friends and colleagues were of all parties, as he cared little for the political game and much for his country, the writer continues:

He did all things well, many things brilliantly, but he was bigger than what he did. He was of the tribe of the Sons of Consolation, always helping lame dogs over stiles, ever ready with advice and help, giving of his rich humanity to needy and shivering souls. His enthusiasm warmed



the world for his friends, and it is a greyer and poorer place since he has gone. It will not be easy to forget the cheery greeting which was almost a caress, the infectious laugh, the whole impression as of a being extraordinarily good and happy and wise. He was the loyalest of friends and the best of companions. The charm of his talk would be hard to exaggerate, for there was never a falsetto note. He would debate keenly, for he loved an argument, and he had an endless fund of good stories and happy reminiscences, which he would reproduce with perfect imitations of voice and manner. And over all there was a kind of glow, that intimate and inexplicable charm which comes not from the head but from the heart. His friends will cherish the memory of the long, loose, manly figure, the eager face, the judicial pent-house brows, beneath which twinkled his boyish eyes. No kinder eyes have ever been sealed by the dust of death.

## CHAPTER VI

### POLITICS

1910-1911

Of the mettled breed, yet abhorring strife,  
And full of the mellow juice of life.

BLISS CARMAN.

LORD MIDLETON writes as follows :

The last seven years of Alfred's Parliamentary life, spent in Opposition, could not be described as being wasted, but the work was by no means congenial to him. In 1903 he had joined a Government exhausted by eight years of office, of which the three years of war had proved a heavy tax after the lustrum which had been long considered, and in many administrations proved to be, the real limit of active government. On the top of this had come Mr. Chamberlain's Tariff proposals, which divided England with extreme bitterness. The General Election of 1906, in which the Unionist Party sustained the greatest rebuff inflicted on any Party since the Reform Bill of 1831, shocked the sense of justice of moderate men. It seemed rather absurd that an administration which could look back on continuous progress during twenty years of almost uninterrupted rule, and which had just carried through a war in which it had had the sympathy of nine out of ten Britons, should be treated as if it had sacrificed every interest of the country, and find itself supported by less than a quarter of the members of the House of Commons. The fact that this disposition of Parties did not in any degree represent the real feelings of the constituencies largely accounted for the intense acrimony with which all subjects were contested for the next seven years. Probably at no previous time in

English history has so continuous a political campaign been carried on for such a period, when no overwhelming national interest was at stake. Every year saw a fresh agitation, conducted with vigour in Parliament, and with untiring recrimination at public meetings throughout the country. First came Religious Education, then the state of the Navy, and the reductions in the Army, which accompanied Lord Haldane's Territorial scheme; then 'the Liquor Trade'; after that the 'confiscation Budget'; then two General Elections in the year 1910, followed by a supreme struggle with regard to the Parliament Bill in the House of Lords, the result of which led immediately to the Home Rule Bill, with the prospect of civil war in Ulster, and to the dismemberment of the Welsh Church, a chapter which was still unclosed at the time of Alfred's death. Throughout the whole of this period also raged the controversy on Tariff, interspersed with such unedifying episodes as the Marconi investments made by members of the Government, creating on the whole an atmosphere calculated to set back rather than to advance the strength of the Empire, which formed to men of Alfred's calibre the main reason for entering public life.

In all these controversies he was forced to bear a part. As a member of what was called the 'shadow Cabinet,' formed mainly of members of the late Cabinet, he was privy to the discussions which took place. But it could not be said that he brought himself to attach the supreme importance to them which was natural to those who had been broken in to the purely political game. . . . Alfred was one of those who always saw the question of Tariff in its proper focus. Blind adherence to Free Trade was as foreign to him as the 'new Heaven and new Earth' which was claimed by extreme Tariff Reformers as the result of Mr. Chamberlain's scheme. Yet it disgusted and revolted him that, on a proposal such as Preference to the Colonies, which from every point of view seemed to him reasonable, the door should be 'slammed, barred, and bolted' in the face of those on whom we should have to depend in the case of any

great Imperial struggle. Similarly he decried what seemed to him the fatuous policy pursued with regard to Ulster, and the injustice involved in the spoliation of the Welsh Church. For these he was willing to sacrifice ease and inclination, but the continued calls to rush about the country, autumn after autumn, and often throughout the Session, in order to denounce the Government for the vagaries of their Parliamentary action, their oppression of certain classes, and their extraordinary incontinence of tongue, as little appealed to him as it would have done while at the Bar to desert the conduct of a case in one of the Higher Courts in order to parry the efforts of some ranting advocate at the Old Bailey. He felt that the true well-springs of National and Imperial life were being choked. Probably many politicians, by the light of subsequent events, have wondered, with a great Prelate, why men who talk so much and do so little could not spare thought for warnings from the men who, throughout their lives, had talked little but done much.

Still, in politics, as elsewhere, the game has to be played according to the rules, and the fact that Alfred could never stimulate great enthusiasm in any cause unless he was really stirred would probably have prevented his figuring in the first ranks of Party leaders.

Alfred wrote from London, in January, about the part which had been allotted to him :

16 GREAT COLLEGE STREET,  
WESTMINSTER, 11th of January 1910.

Yesterday I was put on a small Committee, to whom is devolved the lively task of drawing up a new constitution embracing the Referendum. It is a very heavy job, and I fear will mean my being in London three, if not four, days a week henceforward. Lansdowne asks me and Finlay to go down to Bowood on Friday to settle basic lines. . . . Bring up my guns when you come, in any event, to-morrow, as Lansdowne proposes to shoot, Saturday afternoon, after

growling over these things in the morning. I think of going round to see him this afternoon and asking him to assign me a task which I might do at Wittersham instead of going to Bowood, and very likely it may come off. I feel very sad about the holiday being really over to so large an extent, but the opportunity is great of influencing a large bit of the policy of the party.

His general work all through this year was also 'a very heavy job.' Lord Middleton describes it :

The numerous philanthropic and business undertakings with which he was associated brought upon him every morning an immense correspondence ; and he hated writing letters. He had to leave home early, and was engaged on Arbitrations, Boards, and Committees till the meeting of the House. From three to eleven he was needed in that heated atmosphere, varied by Parliamentary consultations among the leaders, special Committees of the attacked interests, and intervals snatched to write judgments and prepare speeches. He was constantly torn from all these to make long journeys in a hurry, to deliver a pungent speech to a great audience after a hasty dinner, and to return to London in the small hours, jaded and bored, to begin a fresh day.

He was overworked, and he had an inner dissatisfaction with himself and a feeling that perhaps he had not chosen the best arena for his powers : but it would be easy to exaggerate his doubts. The times were very difficult, and battling among uncertainties tired him.

He wrote to me in November 1910, after speaking in Scotland :

GLEN, INNERLEITHEN, N.B.,  
*3rd of November 1910.*

I arrived all right, though rather tired of travelling. I am not sure the night is not better. . . . Your look of

weariness and pain rather haunts me ; you will not think me a bore—but we simply cannot—in the little family, afford that you should be out of action, and to me above all people in the world it makes a vast difference when you are in spirits and free from malaise—I make it a rule (not to be broken)—to be silent even to you about myself in the matter of nerves and dispiritment, because they are so utterly foolish, and I have such immense things to be thankful for—health and children, and above all you . . . and yet these make a sense of not being a real success all the more irritating—and I suppose it is difficult to remember that our business is not to succeed, but to go on failing in good spirits.

The Government were determined, after the House of Lords had thrown out what is called the Confiscation Budget, to pass a Home Rule measure for Ireland, and they devised the Parliament Bill which deprived the House of Lords of its power of veto. The preamble to the Bill promised a final reform, but in the interval the Second Chamber was to be in a condition of suspended animation for an indefinite period. Alfred was convinced that the check of a Second Chamber was absolutely necessary and vital for the stability of a great country, and, in common with all his Party, fiercely resented a procedure, which in an admittedly transitional period would enable the Radical Ministers to pass unhindered any and every measure until they chose to re-endow the House of Lords with some power of revision. In February the debates on the second reading of the Parliament Bill took place. Alfred spoke on February the 28th, 1911.

After referring to the attendance of Colonial



Ministers at the coming Coronation, and the fact that in all their Dominions the constitution provides a Second Chamber with an effective veto,

Let me examine [he said] whether it is the case that legislation is overdue and that it is urgent, because, in order to get it through this House and through Parliament, the intention of the Government is plainly and avowedly for three or four years to create a period in which Single-Chamber government shall in truth and in fact prevail. No one can deny it. . . . I do not think many people would place it at less time than four years, and many people think it would be much longer—in which they may have free warrant for Radical legislation. What is this overdue legislation for which they are making such enormous drafts upon the confidence of the country? . . . Is it social reform? Can any one dispute for a moment that all the social reforms that have been proposed by this Government have been accepted, have been passed, and have been very often, I think, by the admission of hon. and right hon. gentlemen opposite, improved by the minority in this House, and by the majority in the House of Lords? I do not think anybody can dispute that. . . .

We know quite well—it was admitted by the Secretary for War—that the real reason for the creation of this period of time is that they may be free from all opposition of an effective kind; and the real object is that the Government cannot get on with their reform in Ireland without such a time. . . .

He dealt with the condition of Ireland and the success of the Unionist Land Purchase Scheme:

I feel, perhaps, that I have trespassed in dealing even for a moment with the merits of the great controversy of Home Rule. That is not the issue here. The issue here is not upon the merits of Home Rule, but are you willing to submit those merits, right or wrong, to the judgment of the people? That is the issue here. Your policy, and you know it, is

not to consult the people, but to evade consulting the people.

He spoke of the great conference which took place between the leaders of the parties on the reform of the Constitution :

Why, sir, we know that they sat for six months ; we know that they had twenty meetings ; we know that the Prime Minister himself spoke of those debates as having been most laborious, most patient, conducted by both sides with an honest and resolute effort to get to a settlement, and we know as late as even the nineteenth meeting of that conference that the Prime Minister thought himself justified in expressing a sanguine hope as to the conclusion that might result from their labours. I ask what inference any one must draw ? He must know perfectly well that the inference is that both parties must have been content, and rightly content, to make substantial modifications on the position which they originally occupied. But what is happening now ? A Bill has been brought forward, and is apparently going to be pressed through without amendment in this House, embodying the position of the Radical Party before they entered that conference. We now hear, not merely from the Benches opposite, but elsewhere, in the Press, and from most authoritative sources, threats of invoking the prerogative—a tremendous step when it is invoked in order to pass a Bill which you yourselves have obviously consented to modify. . . . If the Government oppose us with a flat refusal to move, we shall continue the fight with a clear conscience. We have kept to the spirit of the time. We have desired to show, and have shown, a willingness and readiness to assent to the verdict of the majority of the country, small though that majority is. We have not sought, and the Peers have not sought, for one moment to maintain unchanged the great historical assembly to which they belong. If no corresponding concession is made on your side to meet the strong and earnest desires of

nearly half the nation, we, at any rate, in this great business will go forward, and we will oppose to you a resistance which I believe will be indomitable because it is justified.

When the Bill was sent up to the Lords the threat was made that, unless it were passed, Ministers would create five hundred Peers pledged to support their plans. Lord Midleton writes on this :

When the great struggle came, on the Parliament Bill, Arthur Balfour's leadership had been highly tried, and probably the wit of man could not have united the divergent views of those who wished to bring home to the country the wreckage of the constitution by forcing the Ministers to create five hundred peers, and those who would have effected a retreat with the minimum of loss in order to renew the struggle. In the excited deliberations of the 'shadow Cabinet,' Alfred favoured the latter course.

Early in July, 1911, the decision was arrived at by a majority, that in the last resort the Unionists should absent themselves and allow the Parliament Bill to be carried. The minority, under the leadership of Lord Halsbury, promptly organised themselves to secure a sufficient number of Peers to defeat the Government. The supporters of Lord Lansdowne, on the other hand, by a brisk canvass soon obtained four hundred promises to abstain. Feeling rose higher and higher as the eventful debate drew near. The final stages of the Bill in the House of Commons were with difficulty kept within the ordinary limits of Parliamentary disorder. The Bill reached the House of Lords early in August.

The Government, fortified by many recent creations of Peers, could, it was known, depend on about a hundred votes. The 'Diehards' were confident of being able to put as many or more into the Lobby. The efforts to detach men from the great Lansdowne contingent, to avoid creation of Peers or to swell the 'Diehards' were incessant, and the conflict

strained the oldest friendships. Alfred, standing on the steps of the Throne as a Privy Councillor, was a keen observer of the final struggle on August 14th.

The scene was as dramatic as any which the Gilded Chamber has ever witnessed. On one of the sultriest days of a hot summer, the House was crowded in every part. The Commons, ladies and spectators thronged every inch of the space allotted to them. Among the Peers, Ministers, ex-Ministers, Bishops, Judges, and Proconsuls were massed in serried ranks to hear the appeals which were to settle the fate of the oldest legislative assembly in the world. Early in the evening sharp encounters took place between four of Alfred's friends long associated in political life, Lords Salisbury and Selborne urging the Peers to stand by their privileges to the last, and Lords Curzon and Midleton pressing home the query to the impatient 'Diehards' what their next step would be when the five hundred Peers were made, and how they justified the immediate passage of the Home Rule Bill and other measures in dispute which would result. To Alfred's sane judgment, the delay of two years in passing a disputed Bill counted for something, and he believed the extremists to be dying in the first ditch rather than the last. Events have borne him out, and five years after the debate the Bills are not yet law. But at the time the 'beau rôle' was with the 'Diehards.' It was only late in the evening, when it was clear they would defeat the Government, that the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Rosebery, and a few other Peers of the greatest weight, rose to announce their intention of voting for the Bill as the lesser of two great evils, and amidst intense excitement, by the narrow majority of sixteen, the immediate crisis was averted.

The issue of this great struggle opened the gates of pent-up Radical legislation, and at the moment when Alfred's appetite for controversy was exhausted, and his sense of the unsatisfying nature of Parliamentary effort was acute, partisan vehemence was redoubled. It is probably due to this that doubt arose whether he would not ultimately leave the troubled arena of politics. A man who has worked

hard for thirty years can hardly be blamed if he considers at fifty-five how his energies can best be husbanded.

But in a very short time the controversy over Welsh disestablishment claimed his interest, and he gave all the best of his thought and power to that fight.







ALFRED AND FISC ON THE STOEP AT GREAT COLLEGE STREET

## CHAPTER VII

### LETTERS

1910-1911

His mirth was the pure spirits of various wit,  
Yet never did his God or friends forget.

ABRAHAM COWLEY.

IN this chapter are brought together several letters on various subjects which Alfred wrote during 1910 and 1911, with a few explanatory words to introduce them.

In 1910 I was tired, and decided to go once more to Schwalbach and regain strength as much by a month of solitude as by the famous iron waters. Alfred, Oliver, and I drove together across the Romney Marshes to Folkestone, they on their way to visit Lord Loreburn, and I to the Channel steamer. Our faithful friend, the black poodle Fisc, accompanied us on the box-seat of the motor. He had lately been through a bad experience. We missed him for twenty-four hours, and he reappeared at last with most of his teeth gone, his jaw ragged and bleeding, and his eyes closed. He lay down helplessly at my feet, having, we supposed, managed to tear himself out of a trap in the woods. This drive to Folkestone was the first time he had been out with the car since his disaster, and running beside it, often for miles at a time, was the great romance and pleasure of his life. When he found himself

once more seated beside the chauffeur, his excitement and joy when we got on the levels made him lose his head, and he jumped without warning straight over the bonnet and was caught by the wheel of the motor. Oliver, who had protested against allowing Fisc to sit on the box-seat, called out, 'It's happened now,' in deep reproach. The motor stopped and I hardly dared look back. But there was Fisc sitting up in the middle of the road. He was badly cut and bruised, but we washed his wounds in a farm near by and continued our journey. The following two letters refer to this :

KINGSDOWN, DEAL,  
*the 14th of September 1910.*

We watched your dear head go down on the horizon with very sad hearts—but we were cheered by taking Mr. Fisc to the Vet, who found merely an abrasion (as we thought) below the eye, and a deep cut to the bone on his dear old fore-paw, which was, thank goodness, not broken. He submitted, lying on his back with his hind leg out, to further treatment, bandaging, antiseptics, etc., with the perfect composure of a high-bred gentleman. And we left him comfortable in the car. It has been a great success at Wittersham, and I have loved it for everything except that I intended and indeed wanted to do more work. As time goes on I shall not be able to do quite so much with Oliver, for though I feel surprisingly young for fifty-three, it is not quite youth in its prime !

BROOKS'S, ST. JAMES'S STREET,  
*18th of September 1910.*

You ought to have got the letter from me about Fisc within a few hours of your arrival, for I wrote it after tea that very evening, and with luck it might even have met you on your arrival.

I let Oliver go for his night with Malvolio,<sup>1</sup> but I believe he was rather glad to see me on Saturday. We had luncheon together—then ‘Tantalising Tommy,’ at which I laughed till I cried—then dinner, very pleasant and confidential—then an affectionate but not dolorous parting—very unlike the tragedy at Boodles’s two years ago, and my handsome darlin’ boy had gone into the night. I feel quite a fool about him—sweet inner thrills of pride, and love not a little—like G. Wyndham and his son. But we must try not to spoil him altogether. To-day I went to the Communion at Saint Paul’s with the divine Palestrina lingering and wandering in the noble vaulted roof. I would love Oliver to have the feeling which I have for these things—no doubt the product of early and tender days, for we are both very broad and unorthodox. Yet the beliefs I have are ministered to and fortified by these divine and mystical services. I hope he will feel their help and comfort. I must write to Mary sometime, and you will not expect quite so many, nearly one a day, as I shall be travelling, and shooting, and shall not be amusing. Never was this place more empty. But I have been happy here to-day at Saint Paul’s and Westminster and talking to you.

Alfred went to stay with the Jack Tennants at their beautiful place in Aberdeenshire, where he had fine sport on the moors. We had been there together the previous year, both the Tennants being intimate friends of mine also :

EDINGLASSIE, STRATHDON, SCOTLAND,  
*15th of September 1910.*

This is written under the inspiration of a Scotch station waiting-room, but when I think of you its unlovely proportions become effaced. I only hope that the fireless apartment at Schwalbach transforms itself as you plunge into imaginations and wield your indefatigable pen. I shall be at St. Andrews at 8.30, and be joined by Evan, Edgar

<sup>1</sup> Melville Balfour, a cousin.

Vincent, A. J. B. to-morrow—a real good quartette for a golf frolic. And Edinglassie has been a great success—no mists or east wind, which ruined the place last year, but snoring breezes from the west and lovely lights—and the colours which one never gets out of the Highlands, deep blue and purple, and gold and browns, and the dark greens of the woods turning sooner than ours. Jack and May very prosperous and happy. My only grief was that you should not have seen it, for the great hills are your delight, and I do not believe the most obstinate headache would not have yielded to the dazzling air.

The personnel of the party and the thaw of common intercourse and sport revealed the humbug of political parties. These people act and think in moments of candour as we do, except for the Tariff, which is an ancillary, though rather a big one, to general political thought.

I shall write to Mary too from this hall of literature (the waiting-room). I think very often of our dear little dispersed family, and feel, thank Heaven, its dear unity. May it ever be so. . . .

And again from

RUSACK'S MARINE HOTEL, ST. ANDREW'S, N.B.,  
*27th of September 1910.*

It has been a success here. A. J. in good form. We had a most excellent talk last night, ranging from Eugenics to payment of members, and the danger to 'intellectuals' of modern platforms and constituencies. To-night Evan,<sup>1</sup> after characteristically throwing out our party by going to stalk, will appear. His conduct has no excuse, but we shall all forgive him—the rascal.

The last letter before my return was from Nostel Priory, Wakefield, Lord St. Oswald's place :

*12th of October 1910.*

I was so afraid of this missing you abroad that I am sending it to Great College Street just to anticipate to-

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Evan Charteris.



morrow. For indeed it is too joyful to think of you. . . . Whittingehame is really too private for letters, at least the political part which is of great interest.

It is just now that the holydays have really told on me, and I felt oh so different from the worn man of July. Only I longed for you, as everything there was to your liking and the fashionables in their very best mood. Then to Hyndford, where the three little girls made us very happy. Dinah two stones heavier and in great spirits. . . .

I passed through indescribable emotions at the Brahms Requiem to-day here. Most beautifully solemnly performed. The first great music I have heard for some months. It was difficult to conceal my disorder, and had you been there we would have wept together.

In October, when in Scotland, he wrote also to Bernard Holland about work he was doing :

GOSFORD, LONGNIDDRY, N.B.,  
*October the 2nd, 1910.*

MY DEAR B. H., . . . I always long for one more adventure with you, though I admit that there seems little chance. I never think of the Colonial Office without a kind of shame that I should have been in one chair and you in another next door. And no one but you would have known so perfectly that the bell meant 'Come in, old boy, and have a talk over things.' If ever I come in again I suppose it will be Home Office or something internal. But I sometimes think a private life would be happier and more useful. Just now I am engaged on an address, which is to be introductory at Birmingham to about a dozen others, to be given by High Commissioners, etc. (rather a distinguished lot) on the 'Dominions.'

I think of giving a little history on very broad lines, of the acquisition and of the secret of the great achievements. Then I wish truthfully to analyse the real relations between ourselves and the Dominions, and to show how as things stand at present Seely's great aspiration of a Greater Britain is not fulfilled—but rather a Confederation of independent



nationalities — differing entirely in their relations to us from the old theory maintained as long as 1895 (see Ripon's despatch of that year), and calling as plainly as anything can for a unifying force, perhaps to be generated by the needs of defence, perhaps by the perils of competitive commerce. I might refer to our own experience when the 'State of Empire' was questioned in a despatch, as a phrase without precedent, by A. J. B. I may also speak of the links which do exist. Judicial Committee—Navy—Investment: the great number and variety, the authorisation of trustees—the Penny Post. Then how is it all to be maintained, with some discussion of the objectors to its size and materiality. Very difficult to say anything new—and yet stimulating to try.

Bless you. I talked to Lady Desborough here about your mother's letters which she loves. I am glad she wrote to you about them. . . . Your affectionate A. L.

In 1911 Mary went to Munich for two or three months with her friend Mary Cecil. Alfred wrote to her on the 21st September 1911 :

It was a sore business, my precious, to part with you this morning and to feel that it must be two months before I looked into your dear candid eyes again, and I was much touched that you minded leaving your rough Dad, who is proud of his darling little daughter, and hopes to bridge the generation and understand and love her more and more. But it is good too to think of the two months which she will have—the widened intellect, the new thought born of a new language alone, beside the new people—new towns—new associations. You will come back enriched by all these things, and by the glorious sounds which will suffuse your little ears. And you will be able to teach me things I cannot know, and be even more of a darling comrade to me than, if possible, you now are.

Yet I love to think that you are content with the

home life, and not eager even for so bright an interlude in it.

Bless you all-ways, my pretty, and may God uphold and keep you.—Your loving  
A. L.

And again on the 26th of November :

DEAREST MARY,—It was very sweet of you to write, and I loved to hear that you were enjoying life so much, and yet not too much to make you unwilling to come back and be with us once again. It seems to me quite the limit of time for you to be away, and it seems an age since I saw your darling little face on the packing-case day<sup>1</sup> at Friendly Green.

I am just now more bothered than I have been for long. Speech on Wednesday last, another to-morrow with overflow, ye gods, at Ipswich, House of Commons all the time, and on Wednesday next, address to the London School of Economics students—worse than anything. However, they are young, and I shall tell them that their Vision is like Jacob's of the ladder, with Angels ascending and descending from heaven—radiant with hope and promise ; mine the next chapter, when the Patriarch wrestles with the man alone through the night. Both may win to the dawn—but one sees the struggle to be sterner and more arduous. Here we are not far from Bawdsey, and can see the broad river which engulfed our precious old dog, and across it the fields where Gilbert<sup>2</sup> waved the club—and made the sear on Oliver's front.

Bumpa<sup>3</sup> and I are thinking of taking a little more shooting at Wittersham, and you will come out and see the pheasants as you would have done at Parmoor, where the youths missed you, and where as usual we had a glorious

<sup>1</sup> A packing-case day meant a miserable one ; an allusion to Cyril Maude's face when sitting on a packing-case in the play called *The Second in Command*.

<sup>2</sup> Gilbert Talbot, son of the Bishop of Winchester, who fell at Ypres on June the 31st, 1915.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Balfour, the children's grandfather.

day till the last bird was in the bag, when the clouds immediately gushed out their waters.

Give the Lady Moucher<sup>1</sup> my love, and to you my sweet Mary, kisses.—Your loving  
A. L.

Edward Talbot, after many years of strenuous work in London as Bishop of Rochester, was appointed to the Bishopric of Winchester. The Bishop's house at Kennington had been a great family centre, and Alfred writes to Lavinia of the coming change :

16 GREAT COLLEGE STREET, WESTMINSTER,  
*the 24th of January 1911.*

DEAREST LAVINIA,—It was dear of you to write : of course in one sense it must be a blow, for the mere feeling that you were both here was a continuous blessing to all of us. But I am too human not to rejoice that the best and wisest and most saintly of our great churchmen has received honour, and I have always felt that the last years of his work should be—it is better for all—in the country, and with some little mitigation of the immense strain of episcopal work in London. And the beautiful old house and Surrey and Hampshire will be very fascinating for you and Winny<sup>2</sup> and the boys, and indeed for older boys too—when they come down—as they will indeed to get the delicious welcome which you have ever given us since the days when we rushed in upon you at Keble on our way to Eton.

Every blessing upon you both in the new and great field.—  
Your loving  
A. L.

<sup>1</sup> Lady Mary Cecil.

<sup>2</sup> His niece.

## CHAPTER VIII

### LADY RIBBLESDALE

1911

Above all the individual sorrow, and far above it, I see the wonderful story of the world and can thank God for life.—BURNE-JONES.

IN 1911 Lady Ribblesdale died after a long tragic illness, a three years' fight for life. She tried all kinds of remedies, and was sent to Davos for the open-air treatment. Here she seemed to get better, but it was only for a time. Alfred and I went out to visit her in 1909. She had established herself with her two daughters in a little private house, and had made friends with all kinds of people in the place. Alfred skated, tobogganed, tried to ski, and enjoyed each sport in turn. But he could only spare a week from his work, and came home depressed about her state. He was with her once or twice in the summer following, when she took a house near Woking, but after that she went into a sanatorium in Wales, and hardly saw even her husband or children. She went down to Hampshire, and her doctors pronounced her better—all the long isolation and quiet seemed justified.

Alfred wrote to Schwalbach :

WHITTINGHAME, PRESTONKIRK, N.B.,  
*October the 6th, 1910.*

The beautiful and glorious news of Charty is indeed a radiant conclusion to the holydays, and has made me feel a

new joy in existence. If, as we may really believe, she is restored, no more wonderful achievement of courage and faith has been seen in our time. It is especially splendid, coming as it does to enrich the marriage<sup>1</sup> with the golden hues of hope and trust.

*I am* sorry to hear of your feeling ill again. I dare say that it is only temporary, let us hope so. But it is sad that you should have a set-back when all else is so radiant. You will have got my catalogue of dates. It is a blow missing the Muirfield competition, which takes place on the 15th! by bad luck—but apart from the wedding, which I could not miss, I never would have failed you on your first day of return. I expect I shall be in London by 8 or 9 on the 14th, suffused with splendid sounds (from Sheffield Festival) and in tune with the thought of you after a longer absence than ever will, I trust, come again. . . .

But our hopes about Charty were soon shattered. She was sent abroad, and while away developed fresh symptoms. She returned to a house which Lord Ribblesdale had taken for her at Wimbledon, and died there in her sleep. However much he had been prepared for her death, Alfred felt it acutely.

I was at Wittersham, but came up to London and found the following note :

*May 1911.*

Thank you for your dear letter. I will come across from the House directly you send for me and tell you all about it. I can hardly write. I spent an indescribably sad evening. I went alone down into the night and saw her in the empty house with the nurse. I cannot describe the pathos of the dear beautiful face, scarcely altered except by the deep sleep.

<sup>1</sup> Charty's daughter, Laura, to Lord Lovat.

And to Bernard Holland :

*4th May 1911.*

MY DEAR B. H.,—Nothing can ever replace entirely my dear sister-in-law, who after my great suffering in 1886 was for years my greatest stay and comfort, and who remade my broken life. I wrote to her every week for the three years during which she struggled with invincible courage . . . but for her, as I looked in her face Tuesday night, so beautiful in its calm, I must not sorrow, though I feel very miserable.

Charty was bound up with much of his life ; she had in her hands a treasure of shared memories ; she had always kept a place for him in her heart. He wrote to her about all that he was doing, though he found it difficult because she could not spend her strength in answering. Unfortunately none of his letters to her are available ; it was not her habit to keep letters, and during her illness those that she received were destroyed.

With Alfred's sorrow was mingled the bitter regret that he should have been cut off from almost all intercourse with her during the last months of her life.



## CHAPTER IX

### PUBLIC WORK

1906-1912

If in your own soul there is any tone of the eternal melodies, you cannot live for ever in these poor, passionate, transitory grindings and discords; you will have to struggle inwards and upwards, in search of some diviner home for yourself.—  
STERLING.

IN the last few years of Alfred's life he devoted a great deal of time to work for all sorts of public causes, inside and outside Parliament. He threw himself with ardour into such questions as Housing and Town Planning, Education, Trades Disputes, and the fight against the Disestablishment of the Welsh Church.

The condition of the workers in sweated industries weighed upon him. He could not endure to think of women working perhaps sixteen and seventeen hours a day, children pressed into the service the moment they came home from school, and the whole earnings of the family barely enough to keep the so-called home together. Owing to the unorganised state of the labour employed, bargaining as to wages was impossible, and the Trades Boards Bill, introduced by Winston Churchill in 1909, copied from a Colonial model, set up in certain industries a board of arbitration composed of employers and employed, with an independent chairman, to adjust disputes. It also provided for the establishment of a minimum

wage in the trades affected by the Bill. In the course of his speech on the second reading (28th of April 1909), he made two statements which sufficiently show the trend of his mind.

He pointed out the difficulty of a policy which regulates employment and restricts hours and wages of work for home industries, exercising no check at all over competitive work in foreign countries, sometimes carried on under even worse conditions.

‘It is quite idle’ (he said) ‘to suppose that you can maintain the two systems together—one which sedulously protects against unfair competition leading to disastrous results at home, and one which, on the other hand, welcomes and invites foreign competition. . . . I do not believe it is tenable that these two systems can continue.’ (But he did not wish to argue that question then, and went on)—‘I am entirely convinced that it has been established that an evil of an intense kind exists in certain quarters and in certain trades—one really which it is almost tormenting to reflect on, if you suffer your imagination to dwell upon it . . . the condition of some poor women and girls in this trade is infinitely behind that of slaves. When we reflect that these people have no political power, I think their condition makes a most urgent appeal to the chivalrous instincts of the House. . . .’

He admitted the fact that to establish a minimum wage in some of these sweated industries meant the death of that industry.

‘Moreover, I myself face the position. I think it is useless not to have the courage to face it—that it is absolutely better that some industries should perish than that they should continue necessary under such conditions as now obtain’; (he went on boldly to recommend) ‘that if an industry were destroyed, it should be the

duty of the authority then set up to look after those forced out of employment, to educate them in other employments, and provide for them temporarily during the course of their education'; (and he ended) 'it seems a mockery if we remain, twenty years after the evils have been exposed, without moving in the direction of aiding those who really have to go through life without any hope and without any joy.'

This speech, coming from the Opposition, produced a considerable effect. Alfred himself had one of his rare moments of satisfaction with his own performance.

BROOKS'S, ST. JAMES'S STREET,  
*28th April 1909.*

To-day I had one of my few successes in the House of Commons, on Sweating. Here is a note from Masterman, and Dilke told Arthur that it was a splendid speech. It was not this—being unprepared in words—but it had the feeling in it which alone makes a speech for me—and of course a pretty complete knowledge of the subject. It was a blow that you were not there—but still I am happy to have made it. . . . Bless you . . . let us do a big thing yet.

Alfred's reason about anything which concerned women was always coloured by his admiration of them and their qualities. He took pleasure too in their idiosyncrasies, their clothes, their gossip, their love of detail. He was clumsy himself over the little mechanisms of life, could never tie up a parcel or manage a stylographic pen, and the facility of women in these minor arts was a continual amazement to him.

In his young days he had resisted strenuously any indulgence, though the temptations which

beset him, as they beset all men, and many women, were fierce. He once said that nothing kept him straight but the recognition that it was the weakness of men like himself which created the great body of women living in dreadful conditions; a class made necessary by the men who desired it to exist for their own purposes, yet ostracised socially, and hustled and punished by the law which left men untouched. He vowed that he would not add one featherweight to the responsibility of men in this matter, and kept his vow. It was this feeling which made him, in November 1912, take a line upon one of the amendments to the Criminal Law Amendment Bill which was misunderstood by many people. The Bill had been brought in by Mr. Arthur Lee, and was directed mainly against the White Slave Traffic. In Committee words were inserted in a clause dealing with the owners of premises used for the purposes of prostitution, which, rightly or wrongly, in Alfred's opinion would not cure the evil, but would drive women more and more into the streets and into the power of the men who exploited them and evaded the law by a so-called marriage. He therefore opposed extending the jurisdiction of the law to the 'person in charge' of premises, and laid himself open to the accusation—freely made afterwards by some of those fighting the White Slave evil outside—that he was lukewarm in his desire to help women. The facts were just the opposite. It was his overwhelming sense of the inequality of the treatment meted out to women and to men in this matter,

which made him, quite unprepared, speak in burning words that undoubtedly wrecked the amendment.

Nobody proposes to punish men for immorality, but what do you propose if I am right, by this Clause, to do with these unhappy women? . . . you are extending the operation of the Act of 1885 by harrying and hunting these unfortunate and unhappy women who are the victims of society. Let me assure the House that no one has a greater detestation of the offence against which the Bill is aimed than I have. I dislike flogging intensely, but I think the mischief so horrible, and the creatures so horrible who minister to procuration, that I cast a vote without a doubt in favour of flogging. When it comes to increasing the severity of the law against these unhappy women, I say that the good feeling of this House in its chivalrous sense ought to protest against it.

On the Suffrage question his chivalry and reverence for women made him dislike their entry into the rough and tumble of political life. But, as he often said, his reason could find no justification for excluding women from their share in the government of the country, and therefore he consistently voted in favour of Women's Suffrage, and not all the excesses of the Militants, though they offended against every nerve of his being, moved him.

His speech on the Franchise and Registration Bill, on January 24th, 1913, was an appeal to the House to remember

that the deliberate action of the State in this country and of the House of Commons had been to ignore the fundamental difference between men and women, and to ask for and obtain women's admission into the very numerous spheres in which, fifty or a hundred years ago, it was not presumed they would enter. . . .

After mentioning the presence of women on Royal Commissions—their work as guardians, county councillors, medical advisers, inspectors—and addressing the members individually, he continued :

For the last thirty or forty years there is scarcely a man among us here who has not invited in politics the assistance of women . . . they are asked to canvass, to speak, to write, and to organise. . . . Rightly or wrongly they are invited to assist us in the dust of political life ; they have in many cases thrown themselves with the utmost assiduity and the greatest self-sacrifice into their work ; they have gone out in all weathers, gone into the most squalid places, and have done the utmost that human beings could do to assist with their influence, their persuasion, their intellectual resources, the candidates who invite their assistance. . . . I really cannot understand the position of a man who has accepted, asked for, and availed himself of and has profited by those services, who can venture to say politics is not a sphere for women. He is stopped from saying that for all time.

After developing the argument for representation of the weaker sex, he treats the excesses of the militant party in a very characteristic way :

There has been an agitation, it is called militancy, the incidents and the events of which have, I confess, filled me with absolute horror. I do not know at which I have felt the greater horror : first the incidents of the agitation, or secondly, I must say, the brutal and cruel spirit, the utterly unchivalrous spirit, which it has been supposed to justify. . . . I say that, in my humble opinion, no statesman ought to yield to crime, and no statesman ought to make concessions to threats. . . . On the other hand, I say that every statesman is entitled, nay, is bound, to weigh any policy which has caused such an agitation, and to remember however misguided, indeed however criminal, the acts of some of these women have been, that women of hitherto blame-



less lives and high aspirations have faced in this cause the greatest ignominy and the greatest suffering.

Naturally Colonial affairs in general, and South African ones in particular, became his special province. Mr. Chamberlain was too ill to attend the House of Commons, and it fell to his successor to take up questions on the Colonial Office vote. Alfred spoke on the new Constitution for the Transvaal, on the renewal of the Chinese Labour Ordinance, and on various other subjects.

As has been said, he thought the policy of granting full responsible Government without any interregnum a mistake, but of course loyally did what he could to help in the matter. He writes to Lucy :

*The 29th of May 1907.*

DEAREST OLD SISTER, . . . I like Botha and believe he means well, but it is easy to do well when everything is given you which other men's valour and persistence have won for the country. No nation has ever done such a thing as not merely hand over the fruits of a war to their opponents—but also the entire work of an immense reconstruction since the war!

Still, we now all have to do our best to make the policy succeed.—Your loving  
A. L.

In the debate on the South African Bill in August 1909—the Bill for the Union of the South African States—Alfred spoke strongly in favour of the Government's action in presenting the Bill to Parliament without any material change in the provisions agreed to by the delegates from the different Colonies in South Africa. He felt that it was necessary to leave all questions of the native vote and right to sit in Parliament to the Union Government.

It is far better to give full and perfect and unfettered trust to the persons to whom you have given that responsibility. . . . Scarcely one stone has been changed in the fabric designed by her architects, and fashioned by her craftsmen. It is useless, however, to disguise that one portion of this Bill has aroused acute controversy, and it would not be respectful for me to ignore for a moment that native aspirations have been in some sense slighted according to their view . . . especially as they have been pleaded here by very able men, very high-minded men, men who have been led in this matter by one of great ability and lofty character, Mr. Schreiner. . . .

Mr. Balfour, in an admirable speech, took the same line. He asked Parliament

to trust the men of a like way of thinking as ourselves to rise to the occasion, which will most undoubtedly come forward. . . . This Bill, which soon I hope will become an Act, is the most wonderful issue out of all those discussions, controversies, battles, bloodshed, devastation, and horrors of war, and of the difficulties of peace. I do not believe the world shows anything like it in its whole history.

Alfred wrote to me on the 19th of August 1909 :

There was a dreadfully languid and scanty House on Monday for the African debate, and I did not feel inspired at all—on the contrary, dispirited by the apathy and intense fatigue of every one. Yet in reading my speech over I said more or less what I wanted, and it was perhaps useless to have attempted a longer speech as I intended, but rejected on seeing the disposition of the House. I really felt deeply for Schreiner, and it was with the greatest difficulty and embarrassment that I made myself give a support to opponents. Yet Arthur's extraordinarily powerful and broad reasoning left me in no doubt that my conclusions were the right ones. The South Africans have truly done a wonderful and unprecedented thing in getting—under the circumstances—their Union. They have to

deal with undivided responsibility with the most formidable problem which confronts any Government, a native population five times outnumbering the whites, and maintaining the rate of increase against the white. To interfere with these from here would pull out the linch-pin from the machine.

Mr. Bernard Holland, in an article in the *Cornhill Magazine*,<sup>1</sup> writes the following about Alfred's general position in the House :

House of Commons critics thought him, I believe, to be deficient in the quickness of decision and reply necessary for a leader in debate, but in more important respects he would have been an admirable leader of the Unionist party. He was generous, appreciative, and many sided, and had, therefore, the power beyond most men of uniting and holding together men of different characters. He was a man whom one naturally desired to consult in any difficulty. . . . Mr. Chamberlain liked him, and once said that, when he felt depressed during one of his own speeches, he turned to look at Alfred Lyttelton, and at once felt cheered and supported. If a man so much superior in age and renown felt this, how much moral support younger men would have derived. Leaders do not always remember how much they can do for their party, and even for themselves, merely by listening with evident attention to what their humbler followers have to say. If Alfred Lyttelton was not rapid in retort, or in that questionable parliamentary art which consists in the rapid invention of tactical phrases and devices, it was partly because he had a fair and not partisan mind, more fitted, perhaps, to high administrative posts than to the warfare of a democratic assembly. Lord Clarendon, in his *History of the Rebellion*, speaking of the difficulty which good men had in meeting the tactics of Pym and his crew, says that there are certain very effective weapons of popular agitation and acquisition of

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by permission from the Editor.

power (he recites them, and they are by no means obsolete now) which 'a gallant man would hardly give himself leave to use for the preservation of the three kingdoms.' Alfred Lyttelton was a 'gallant man' in this sense. He liked to deal with a question upon its merits. He wished to reform things, not to assail persons. His temperament might, after a certain age, have been more suited to the atmosphere of the House of Lords, and he would, I think, have liked to finish his career in the serener and finer air of our British Senate.

Mr. Ian Malcolm contributes on the same subject :

Somehow I always think of Alfred in the House of Commons more as an atmosphere than as a parliamentarian. From the first day of his arrival the House 'was glad of him.' Until he became Colonial Secretary he spoke very little, but his fellowship was felt all the time. All sorts and conditions of men consulted him, and nobody that I ever heard of sought his advice in vain. In politics, as in everything else, he was sporting and fair and reasonable. He had an ingrained sense of 'the rules of the game' and, whatever the provocation, he was no more capable of taking what he thought an unfair advantage of his opponents than of disputing the umpire's decision at Lord's. He did not need to prove all this : everybody knew it about him from the first ; but there were some who misunderstood him and thought that he might have served his cause better if he had been more uncompromising in manner and less suave in speech. But they were wrong. He was in the Cabinet in days when Party feeling ran at its highest, and when the Colonial Office was the perpetual target of slings and arrows that no man could number. But Alfred's temper never failed him, his judgment never swerved ; and in all the fierce controversies that succeeded the South African War, and in all the internal domestic struggles over Tariff Reform which hampered the Unionist Party's usefulness for so long, he stood high among those few who were in the forefront of the battle yet never lost a friend.

Mr. L. S. Amery, in a letter written on the 6th of July 1913, also describes Alfred's influence in the House :

When I was listening to his speech in the Marconi debate—the best in some ways that I thought I had ever heard him make—I felt what a strength to us he would be when the real trouble came, when the fire and indignation which his natural gentleness kept back would take command of him and make him inspire and lead others. There was so much, too, we might have hoped for when the time came for him to hold office again. And yet all this was only a small part of the personal influence that he was to all who knew and loved him. And that at any rate remains with us, a memory of his justness, his unselfishness, his humour and wisdom. And something more than a memory, I believe, a continuing living influence and power for good. There are just a few persons for whom the personal affection of their friends remains as fresh and real, and whose influence is as living and present a thing, for years after their death, as if they had never gone. And Alfred Lyttelton will be one of those.

Even though he had given up practice at the Bar, he was constantly overworked and worried by the incessant rush and strain. This little note to his sister, dated the 30th of March 1906, gives some idea of the claims made upon his time outside Parliament :

DEAREST LAVINIA,—Since February I have spoken for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, Toynbee Hall, Gladstone Convalescent Home, Bishop of Winchester's Fund, and am engaged to Mother Cécile, Ted's<sup>1</sup> Boys at Woolwich, Seamen's Mission, Children's Country Holiday Fund, Bishop of St. Albans' Fund, and Boys' Federation, so you must not quite break a willing horse's back. It is

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Edward Talbot, his nephew.



not that there are not minutes in the day, but these little orations are very difficult to make of any effect without preparation, and I cannot always give it.

When Lord Crewe took office in December 1905, the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust invited Alfred to succeed him as President. This great town-planning scheme, as is well known, had been inaugurated and carried through mainly by the wonderful initiative and energy of Mrs. Barnett, wife of Canon Barnett of Toynbee Hall. Alfred accepted the post, and loved his work in connection with the suburb. He took great pride in its rapid progress, and often drove out to see the buildings. The large cricket field which the Hampstead Co-operative Tenants are about to open will be called the Alfred Lyttelton recreation ground, and there is already a lectern dedicated to his memory in the church.

The National Theatre movement interested him greatly, and he was a member of the Shakespeare Memorial Committee. Never were his gifts as an arbitrator more valuable than on the occasions when he took the chair and steered the discussions of one of the most excitable collections of people ever flung together by differing interests. He was made President of the Birmingham and Midland Institute, and chose for the subject of his address 'The Organisation of the Drama.' In the midst of all his other work he contrived somehow to write a suggestive and charming paper. He was over-tired, and on the morning of the day he was to deliver it he suddenly felt unable to work any



more. He called me down to his room, where he was sitting surrounded by sheets of manuscript on the floor: he had to go out at once and asked me to gather up the pages and meet him at the train. 'I shall make an utter fiasco of the thing,' he said—'you'll see—I simply can't do it.' I set to work and found that he had really written the whole paper and that it only needed pinning together and finishing with about three sentences. I got it done in a rush, and met him at the station with some food and the cheering information that all was well with his lecture. He looked very ill and miserable, but was wonderfully restored by surprise at his own achievement when he read it through! The address went very well indeed, was listened to with great interest, and was afterwards published.

Naturally, as he had left the Bar, he received many offers of directorships, but he was determined to go on no board of directors concerned in the remotest degree with interests which might some day touch the work of a Government office. I once counted up the income he had refused in this way, though of course no human being could have held all these directorships at once, and it amounted to thirteen or fourteen thousand a year.

Alfred always took a lively interest in Cambridge House, the University Settlement in South London, and more than once spoke for it; he also helped with the formation of the Cavendish Club—and his speech made at the inaugural meeting of the Club's

Social Service Bureau was a stirring appeal to young men to give their thought and time and personal service to the vast social problems confronting them. After speaking of the corporate spirit engendered in Englishmen by their training, he says :

There is a tradition among University and public-school men, of loyalty, and a tradition of courage. Well, these men come up by hundreds every year into London. We ought not to waste the fresh and eager force which they bring with them. On the contrary, the dark unlit caverns of the poor, upon which the glittering fabric of our civilisation has been built, need—passionately need—their radiance and buoyancy. . . . The new century . . . certainly will bring its changes. Whether those changes are revolutionary or whether they are made in co-operation between rich and poor, must depend largely upon whether the poor know the rich and whether the rich know the poor. . . .

He has a charming passage on the manners of the Club :

I trust the good rule which prevails at some very old-fashioned clubs will prevail in this one—namely, that everybody will consider himself introduced to everybody else. Thus if a man is reading a paper while he is enjoying his dinner, it should be an indication that he wishes for a pause in the babble of the day ; but if he is not, and is sitting next to somebody with whom he is not acquainted, in the Cavendish Club at any rate, I hope we shall not see the spectacle of two Britons sitting by each other, wrapped in that passive indifference and silent fury which is regarded as characteristic of our race on the Continent.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Among other organisations with which he was connected one might mention the Children's Country Holiday Fund, of which he was treasurer, the Gilchrist Trust, the Peabody Trust, and the Council of Queen Alexandra's House.

It is impossible not to regret intensely that he will not be here to exert his influence directly in all the efforts at reconstruction after the War. He would have thrown himself into the task with ardour, and the new spirit of the time might have found in him one of its most radiant exponents:—he could have greeted the courage and the self-sacrifice of the young with generous emotion, and given all his experience and his intuition in their service when the opportunity came. But it may well be that such regrets are caused only by imperfect vision.

## CHAPTER X

### EAST AFRICA

1913

Nous ne sommes jamais tout à fait formés. Il y a toujours quelque chose en nous que l'âge ne mûrit point.—BOSSUET.

ALFRED was exhausted by the work of the winter: he had begun to feel a certain lassitude, and an irritation with the ceaseless whirl of life. His Christmas holiday had been very short; he was kept in London by arbitrations, and could not get any consecutive days' rest; his daughter Mary, who was to be called grown up, went to Hatfield for a ball on the 2nd of January 1913, and Alfred managed to appear at it.

We had invited a party of young people for a dance we gave at Wittersham in Mary's honour; there was an absurd play which they acted, but Alfred could not get down for it. Great discussions were going on in London, over party matters, and his presence at them was necessary.

He wrote from the House of Commons on the 8th of January 1913:

It really is awfully hard luck missing the play. But there it is. And the substituted work here is of the very driest. Curates—Commutation—Composition. . . . Oh dear, I am sick at missing the play and hitting the Ball, for I am rather tired. . . .

And to his sister, from the House of Commons, on the 29th of January 1913 :

DEAREST LUCY, . . . I have two bills in my charge—the Welsh, and Trade Disputes—and have had the intervening bother of the women. I see the other side in that question very plainly—but on the balance I am where I am.

You may imagine I am pretty hard driven with arbitrations on my flank also. Bless you, dear.—Your loving A. L.

Old James will be very interesting.

The postscript alludes to his commission to write a biography of Lord James. He was reading through the material during the last weeks of his life, and spoke several times of the letters and records, and of his delight in them. His affection for his old chief would have made him enjoy the work, and I think he would have written a striking book.

Alfred decided that the moment had come when he and I should take a real holiday, for in fact we were both tired. He dangled Sicily before me, and I almost believed he really would go, and began to look forward. Then one night several friends came to dinner, among others Mr. and Mrs. George Lloyd, who were starting in five days for East Africa. I called out to Alfred across the table, ‘This is what we ought to do.’ Alfred took fire at once, and next morning the berths were taken, and in five days we started, Alfred and I, and Mary only just out of bed after bronchitis. This journey was a great delight to all of us, the only regret being that Oliver could not be taken away from Cambridge to share it.

S.S. ‘PRINCESSIN,’ 13th February 1912.

DEAREST NOLL,—We have just got aboard quite a nice ship, with the most attractive type of German sailor about.

Mary is making a most philosophic traveller. We avoided a record rough passage from Marseilles, and with the exception of an almost unbroken flow of sovereigns from my breeches' pocket, all is well and prosperous. But I think often of you, and don't like missing even one holiday, especially do I wish I could have seen even if at a distance your next golf match. . . .

We have a splendid lot of books here, and I shall return full of ancient and modern lore. The account I have read of the big-game shooting will make me—as a poor rifle shot with indifferent long sight—rather careful. They say, get within forty yards of the lion before you shoot, so as to be sure of him. It seems to me at that distance if you are not sure of him—he will be quite sure of you.

Bless you, dearest old boy, and be as happy as we can make you from this far distance.—Your loving A. L.

Alfred was of course offered every facility for seeing the colony ; a special train in which he could live, invitations to see all kinds of experiments, and interviews with the men who were helping to make this wonderful new country. At Mombasa he sat up out of doors late into the night with Captain Leggett of the British East Africa Corporation, discussing the new harbour, the labour questions, and many other problems. Captain Leggett's house is built on a coral reef jutting out into the sea, and there were no mosquitoes to fear.

We travelled up to Nairobi and stayed with the governor, Mr. (now Sir) H. C. Belfield. Every one was anxious to help. Mr. F. Ward planned out an itinerary for us in minute detail, and made all the arrangements. We went right up to the Victoria Nyanza by the Uganda railway, across the lake to Entebbe, Kampala, Jinja. Coming back we



used the train as a base, and stayed for a few days or hours at various places, Njoro and Niavasha the principal ones. Alfred enjoyed himself like a boy ; he was helpless about all travelling difficulties, but luckily everything was settled for him. He began by dropping £40 on the platform at Victoria station, and that was recovered ; but he left some of his luggage behind. He often forgot to pack his pyjamas, or his sponge, and refused to open his bag to put them in. Mary generally brought up the procession carrying these. He got into the wrong carriage at Kisumo, and was searched for by every official in the place, while the right train was waiting to start down country at seven in the morning. He was found at last sound asleep, and had to bundle across the line with all his belongings carried after him. But nothing of that sort mattered : he seemed perfectly well, young and vigorous, took an immense interest in all he saw, admired the splendid work Englishmen are doing up and down the country, and made friends with every one.

British East Africans are full of hope and enterprise. Alfred was struck by the fact that a public-school man was generally in charge, very often an Etonian to boot ; and this was a special delight to him. Every one was eager to show him all they could, to explain their difficulties, and draw pictures of a glowing future if only the Home Government would do this, that, or the other. To all this Alfred listened with sympathy ; sometimes he agreed, sometimes he did not, but he felt more than ever the importance of actual personal experience. 'Next year I shall go to Ceylon,' he said. But besides all

the wonderful interest in what might be called the business side of the Colony, there was the romance and wonder of seeing wild life. It sounds incredible that this should be possible even from a train, but the railway has been made in faith ahead of the settlers; the wild animals have grown accustomed to the new beast who puffs up and down the hills, and vast herds can be seen feeding on the plains, while giraffe, baboon, gazelle, zebra, hyena, jackal, deer, lion constantly cross the line. At every railway station there are crowds of natives with very scanty clothing, sometimes none at all, covered with brass rings and chains, their ears with huge slits holding barbaric ornaments made of buttons, pencils, and even jam pots. The natives have not been molested; they are prevented from fighting each other, that is all. 'But if we may not fight, what are we to do,' said the Masai, who are herdsmen, and do not care to cultivate mealies like most of the tribes.

At Jinja, in Uganda, Alfred was pulled up a steep hill by an enormous black gentleman in a red cap who sang the whole time, turning round and giving the leading word in a sort of musical grunt, with a very comic leap of his body, which was answered by a ceaseless drone on two notes by the others. The words were something like this:

The white man is very clever,  
He has brought the iron;  
But the iron is no use  
Without the wood.

meaning that the white man brought the rickshaw

but the black man has to pull it. His face was perfectly serious, and he was not apparently disturbed by Alfred's helpless laughter. But this same black gentleman nearly killed him when he took him down the hill again at a great pace, and turned him over into a ditch.

I kept a diary, from which a few extracts shall be given :

*Sunday, 16th March,*  
NAIVASHA, on a siding.

At 7 o'clock, instead of at 1 as we had been told, our car was moved out of Njoro station. Mary and I were so tired that we slept rather late, and had to do a good deal of dressing during the shunts and grunts of the train. Nkuru with its blue lake was lovely in the morning light. As soon as we left the station we began to see game, and from that moment and for an hour and a half the sight was extraordinary. There was a beautiful plain, quite surrounded by hills, and the wild game on it looked really like herds and herds of tame cattle. There were thousands of them. We saw the usual antelope, Thomson's gazelle, Grant's gazelle, impala, hartebeest, zebra, ostrich, greater buzzard, hyena, and a whole group of huge baboon. Many times the animals were within twenty yards of us. The hyena jumped off the line, the baboon we first caught sight of was moving off slowly on all fours about thirty yards away, and then suddenly we saw sixteen or seventeen others round him. We have not yet seen giraffe or lion, but there is still a chance of both.

In the back of Alfred's mind all the time was the longing to kill a lion ; he knew it was not very likely that he would have a chance, but he could not help desiring it intensely. The only possibility was at Katanga, a farm belonging to Captain Morrison, and managed by a well-known white hunter called





SIR H. BELFIELD AND ALFRED STARTING OUT ON A  
LION HUNT AT KATANGA, EAST AFRICA, 1913

Lucy. Mr. Freddy Ward, Captain Morrison's representative, had arranged for us to stay there for ten days. This place stood above the Athi and the Kapiti plains, all infested by lion, but it is possible to live in the country for many months and not see them.

The ten days spent at Katanga were a pure delight from beginning to end; probably Alfred never enjoyed anything more in his life.

*19th March 1913.*

We got to Nairobi about twelve, the platform crowded with people. The George Lloyds had come down to meet us, and they introduced us to Mr. Grogan, who gave such a terrific picture of the ticks at Katanga that my spirits sank. He said we *must* be careful, that he had often been made ill for a fortnight by them, that they simply swarm, and so on. I asked him what was the right thing to do, and he at once hurried off to the town, and returned with two pots of preventive grease and three cakes of carbolic soap, and said we were to use them vigorously whenever we went out. Nothing but my confidence in Freddy Ward, born of experience, comforted me. . . . His Excellency and his A.D.C. joined the expedition. We arrived at Kapiti Plains station about two hours and a half late. Here we were bundled out on to the road. Mr. Lucy, the manager of Katanga farm, was there to meet us, full of cheerfulness and resource, though I think the mass of luggage must have daunted him a little. About fifteen black creatures were called up, and on their heads were placed what looked like the most appalling loads—boxes, and rugs and bundles—and they started off cheerfully to walk the sixteen miles, a great deal of it up and down hill, only anxious to get away so as to be in before dark, when the terrors of lions and leopards begin. . . . The drive was interminable, but I enjoyed every minute of it, and only wished I were riding with Alfred and His Excellency,



who cantered on in front, and occasionally got off their horses and fired a shot at kongoni, or antelopes, or reed buck. . . . It was quite dark before we reached the bottom of the hill on which Katanga farm stands, and we bumped and scrambled through a stream somehow. I had expected a rough little shanty on the edge of a plain, but I found myself in a very nice house high up on a hill, with a sort of hall dining-room like the kitchen of an English farmhouse, a drawing-room opening out of it, and a garden gleaming in the moonlight. . . .

The next day and several days following we went after lion, but only saw every other sort of animal. One of these hunts was a drive organised by the District Commissioner, Mr. Osborne, at His Excellency's request.

When we got to the place we found Mr. Osborne with about forty natives. . . . They were WaKambi, some of them wearing wonderful chains. . . . The day, however, produced nothing except a wart hog, which Alfred shot. It was a wild sight all the same, the yelling and screaming savages, streaming along on either side of the bank—the great reeds and bushes masking every turn and bend, the brilliant sunlight making shadow and shine as marked as the stripes on a tiger. . . .

Alfred went out every day; he shot impala, Grant's gazelle, Thomson's gazelle, kongoni, but to his great disappointment saw no leopard or lion. He had almost given up hope of big game, and then suddenly the chance came.

*27th March 1913.*

This was to be a day of small fry, partridges, hares, anything which might turn up, so we did not start much before nine. I was on Blackie, Mary on a mule, Alfred on

a dun-coloured pony, and Mr. Lucy on his kicking mule. We soon began to see game as we moved slowly downhill towards Lukenia<sup>1</sup> point, where our luncheon was to be sent. When we reached the donga which runs for many miles parallel with Lukenia, a little desultory beating was done by the few natives we had with us. Altogether Alfred got about three brace of partridges. It was fearfully hot. . . . I began to wish I had reserved myself for the lion hunt on Wami next day; I slipped off my pony when we scrambled up a big bank from pure fatigue and was absurdly inclined to cry. We were rounding a big bend of the donga and I suddenly felt that something was going to happen. I proposed to Mary that instead of following every wind of the donga we should cut across. I could see Alfred some way beyond hopefully pursuing an antelope. We passed on our right a large patch of brushwood—Mr. Lucy urged the dogs into it. They found a hare and started to run it, but looking back I saw Mr. Lucy still standing in the same spot. After a moment he shouted to us, ‘Get Mr. Lyttelton back—quick!’ We rode on a few paces and shouted to Alfred and hurried back, Alfred after us. Mr. Lucy explained that one old dog had sat down on the edge of the bush and howled, and that none of the dogs would go in. ‘There is something there,’ he said, ‘I feel sure of it.’ . . . He collected our five or six boys, posted Alfred at one end of the bush, and Mary, he, and I stood behind the natives. The whole bush could only have been about 30 feet by 15 feet. Shouting and chucking sticks, the heartened-up dogs screaming and jumping, they got a little way into the bush. Then one of the natives rushed to the right shouting, ‘Simba! Simba!’<sup>2</sup> and pointing away from Alfred. We ran forward and there was a huge beast sloping out. It turned its head for one moment in our direction . . . a lion . . . and in a second seemed to get over the hundred yards or so which divided us from the donga and disappear down it. I yelled for Alfred to come round, and Mr. Lucy in a great state of excitement got up to him. ‘Now, sir, I tell

<sup>1</sup> A mountain.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Lion! Lion!’

you what I want you to do : get on Kongoni and ride down this side of the donga about a quarter of a mile, till you find a good place—take your boy with you—and look after yourself !’ By this time Alfred was on his pony and off. Mr. Lucy shouted, ‘ You ’ve got two guns,’ and the boy began to run after him. I hardly realised what was happening, but when in a moment I did, and saw that Mr. Lucy was going to beat the donga with the natives, and that Alfred was quite alone with a light rifle, a .303, and a possible second shotgun if his bearer stood, I began to be frightened. Then I saw his boy rushing back : I called out to him to follow the ‘ Bana,’ and he turned again and ran after Alfred’s vanishing form. . . . We could hear the wild shouting of the beaters, and Mr. Lucy’s deep baying notes as he urged the men on. I had time to think, and I grew more and more alarmed : Alfred was doing the very thing which led to George Grey’s death : following a lion alone, and with far too light a gun, and he was not even experienced in the game. . . . There was a shot and then complete silence, and we could see absolutely nothing. . . . We moved forward on our mounts, and at a big bend found Alfred and Mr. Lucy greatly excited. Alfred had seen the lion within a few yards of him, but had not dared to shoot right into the beaters ; the lion broke out of the donga, came towards him and then swerved, and as it swerved he fired and missed. The spoor was taken up and for a few moments Mr. Lucy thought the beast had taken to the open, and was off across the hills to Chumbi or perhaps even to Wami (both hills). But the Neopala, the head man, called out that he had found the spoor on the other side. There it was, sure enough, bounding out of the donga, and then into it again a little farther on. ‘ Now,’ said Mr. Lucy, ‘ the thing to do is to cut across the country—about a couple of miles, while the boys beat the donga which makes a great bend here.’ There was a moment’s doubt as to whether Alfred was to go alone, or Mr. Lucy with him, but to my great relief it was thought the boys could manage without a white man. ‘ And what about us ? ’ I said. Mr. Lucy looked rather grave. ‘ Oh ! I

think you'd much better go up to the hut close here and have luncheon and wait quietly.' My face dropped. 'Do you want to come,' he asked, 'and be in at the kill?' 'Of course, of course,' we both said. 'Very well then, you mustn't mind a bit of cantering,' and off we went, Mr. Lucy explaining to Alfred that if the lion broke into the open they must gallop after it at once. It was very bumpy, very hot, but all fatigue and hunger were entirely submerged. At last Mr. Lucy jumped off, went into the donga, found no spoor, so he knew the lion had not passed yet—the donga was very sandy and it had not crossed out our way, and there remained only two possibilities, that it would be driven gradually down the donga right at us, or break out on the other bank. But Mr. Lucy felt sure it would come right down the donga. He found a good place about 30 yards beyond a bend, and he put Alfred in front at the edge. 'Now you go and sit next to hubby!' he said to me. We had four guns, three light rifles and a shotgun, which the boys running after us were carrying. 'Now, sir,' said our commander, 'I want you to remain absolutely still—if the lion comes and hears anything it might turn him'; he felt sure it was a lion—I equally sure it was a lioness because I had seen it better, though I thought the Zoo might perhaps not be an infallible guide. Alfred sat down with the rifle across his knee, and the shotgun beside him. Mr. Lucy picked it up and looked at it. 'Not loaded,' he said in reproach. So it was loaded and handed to me. I also held fresh cartridges for the rifle. Mr. Lucy stood up immediately behind me, and Mary sat behind Alfred. She was also given a rifle. And then we waited. Oh, the ticks!—it was irresistible after a bit to pull them off, in spite of Mr. Lucy's grave immobility.

We were looking down the narrow bed of a dry river—the bottom deep in sand, the high banks covered with trees and creepers and long grass. The sunlight flickered through here and there, but on the whole there was a green quiet in the shade. It was strange to sit there in complete peace and silence, but in momentary expectation of a

great wild animal coming at us. We knew that we could not see the lion till it was within a very few yards of us, and that if Alfred missed, or if the light bullet did not hit a vital part, anything might happen. A wounded lion can charge with terrific force and rapidity; there would be no time to reload, barely time to take a fresh gun. I remembered with thankfulness that we all had permanganate with us, and that our one business—Mary's and mine—was to hand the fresh guns. But as the moments went on and on, only broken by the intermittent distant shouting of the native beaters as they wound their way along the twisting donga, everything began to grow unreal and fantastic, and we all, I think, slipped into a half-dreamy state. One cannot expect for ever. Alfred at last whispered to me that he was afraid the lion had got away: it was so like the other times when we had waited in vain. But I looked up at Mr. Lucy, still standing quite immovable, and he would hardly smile. There was not even a crackle in the bushes; every now and again the sharp note of a bird, frightened by the cries, would cut through the air . . . the ticks crawled and crawled. . . . Suddenly Mr. Lucy pointed. . . . Right in front of us about 20 yards off came the lion, looming enormous, in the funnel of the donga, with its bright yellow skin framed in green. It saw us, and for a moment stood still. 'Fire, fire!' cried Mr. Lucy, and at Alfred's first shot the creature with a great bound leapt into the air, turning and lashing its tail and growling. Alfred paused for a moment to see the effect of his shot, which sent the hunter into a paroxysm of excitement. 'Shoot again, man!' he shouted. 'Shoot! good God! What's the man thinking about!' he cried. Alfred shot and hit again. I handed him his fresh cartridges, but while he was reloading Mr. Lucy put in a shot—he dared not wait, for even though the lion was down, he knew the risk if life were left in it at that short distance. Then the dogs ran forward barking and began pulling at the lion. Very cautiously we advanced—sometimes there are nasty surprises, the lion, apparently dead, suddenly springing up



and charging. But this time there was no movement whatever, only the sort of slack response which the muscles gave to the tugs of the dogs. We stood round her—for it was a lioness—and I shall never forget Alfred's face. He just looked at Mr. Lucy and nodded, he was too pleased to speak. We marvelled at the lioness's huge size and strength; the paws were as heavy to lift as great soft dumb-bells. We could still hear the distant cries of the natives, the little shrill notes of the birds, but near us even the dogs were still. . . . It was very late, almost 6, and we had had nothing to eat since 8.30. The boys had retrieved our luncheon basket, and we tried to eat but we couldn't; tea was the only thing. The natives began skinning the lion after Mr. Lucy had started it, but they had only one knife among them so they were rather slow. There was no time to dawdle, the dark comes down so quickly, but we could not leave the boys behind, and had to wait till the great skin was carefully rolled up and put on one black head, while the skull, bloody and terrible, was put on another. Some of the others shouldered the partridges and the two hares. It was quite dark long before we reached the road; there was no moon, very few stars, and soon a sharp storm of rain came on ending in drizzle. The horizon was lit by flashes of lightning, which showed up wet gleams here and there in the road, and for a second allowed us to see Chambi, Theki and Katanga, and even distant Wami, standing at the edge of the Athi and Kapiti plains.

I was very, very tired—sometimes I felt I could hardly stick on the horse. We were drenched with rain. We had got ten miles to go—but what did it all matter? We had found and seen, and killed a lion. About half a mile from home we met natives with lanterns shouting and blowing whistles, and just outside the gate poor Mrs. Lucy pale with fears. . . . '*Thursday's bag, six partridges, two hares, one lion,*' was the telegram which went to the Governor next morning.



Alfred was like a boy in his delight : he was back in feeling to the old days of cricket successes.

This was the last day but one of our stay at Katanga. We rode down to the station, and joined a lot of friends on the train, parting most sadly from the kind Lucys who had given us all three such a wonderful experience. But before we left we had the privilege in the early morning of seeing for the first time the great mountain Kiliminjaro, standing up out of the plain, and above the wreathed clouds. Though she was at least ninety miles away she seemed quite near, a splendid figure rearing herself out of the torrid heat with snow on her head.

We spent a Sunday at Mombasa and went to evening service in the Cathedral. It was soothing, after the incessant travelling among strange sights and people, to find ourselves in that cool place with the beautiful and familiar words floating to us across a haze of confused experience. Alfred spoke to me after of the peace and happiness it had given him once more to be in church. For all his keen interest in the wonderful journey he had missed the services of the Church and the help of its ritual, and he was sorry that for the first time in his life he had not spent the anniversary of the day that May Lyttelton died, with his sister Lavinia, who year by year still gathers about her on Palm Sunday a little band of people who loved and who remember that bright spirit.

Alfred was invited to speak at the Mombasa Club on the day we sailed. He was at his best and


made a very good speech, which pleased his audience because it showed that his imagination had been fired by the wonderful possibilities of the country. There was a great deal of chaff and congratulation about the lion, all of which he enjoyed to the top of his bent.

On the journey home Alfred wrote the series of articles on the Colony which appeared in the *Times*; he was languid and slack physically, but full of new vigour mentally, and making many plans for the future.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE END

1913

Whom the gods love die young  but whom they honour,  
them they take up to their eternal habitations in the ripe  
summer-time of existence.—MARY COLERIDGE.

Somewhere surely afar,  
In the sounding labour-house vast of being,  
Is practised that strength.  
Still thou performest the word of the Spirit in whom thou  
dost live,  
Prompt, unwearied.

Who going through the vale of misery use it for a well, and  
the pools are filled with water.—PSALM lxxxiv.

ALFRED did not feel as rested as he hoped after the East African journey ; but, as has been said, he was certainly refreshed mentally, though he did not find the stress and strain of life lessened to his consciousness. He spent the Whitsuntide holiday almost alone at Wittersham, the countryside then in its height of beauty, and, because he did not play too much golf, never enjoyed it or appreciated it more.

He spoke in the south of England, and wrote to me :

I did rather well at Torquay and they were very cordial about it, but I had quite one of the successes of my life at Kingsbridge, where to a really splendid audience somehow everything went well. All the right words fell into their places, and jokes ; altogether for a good hour it was as jolly as a run over a fine country. But, alas, the results are not what they should be, for there seems no real revulsion in

London, and Lancashire is apparently unchanged. However, we must go on with furious energy. I am quite looking forward to Leamington.

In June Alfred paid his first visit to Ireland, on an urgent invitation to address a great meeting of southern loyalists at Cork. He enjoyed the three days' trip immeasurably, and was charmed with the people and his reception. There had been some apprehension that the meeting would be disturbed or even broken up, owing to the excitement of the time, but all passed off serenely. 'Alfred's reasoned defence of the Union,' says Lord Middleton, 'hardly met the temper of an audience boiling over with indignation at their approaching fate, but, as usual, he left behind him a chain of pleasing memories.'

It was his last effort outside Parliament, except for a speech in Hyde Park on the Disestablishment Bill. His Welsh Church Bill speeches followed, and were probably the best and most convincing of his life. He was indeed absorbed in the fight, the leadership of which had fallen into his hands, and he showed a grasp of detail and a pertinacity in amendment which earned him great praise.<sup>1</sup> He was pleased and stimulated by the sense of success, and said laughing that his shares were up again. The glow of his East African experiences was still about him; he had gathered new ideas, new impulses, he had seen men who were making a new country;

<sup>1</sup> 'We younger Churchmen in the House regarded Mr. Lyttelton with the feelings that sons do their father; no man ever commanded such feelings of respect and devotion from those whose privilege it was to follow him in debate, and his loss comes to us as the hardest blow that has fallen our cause during the fight.'—LETTER FROM A MEMBER.

the future seemed again full of possibilities, and there might, he felt, be more lions for him to meet and vanquish. Perhaps it was the influence of this renewal of energy as well as the desire to do a kindness which made him accept to play cricket at Bethnal Green, a match got up by Mr. Harry Wilson to amuse his supporters in the constituency. Alfred was not very keen to go when it came to the point, for his time was over-full, but I encouraged him, thinking it would be good for him to get a day in the air. When he came home he was jubilant : ' It's a pity you weren't there,' he said. ' I made 89 runs.' He complained of stiffness but never mentioned that he had been hurt. That evening he went to a ball given by Mrs. Frank Tennant and stayed a little while to watch the dancing. It was the first London ball he had been to for a long while, and it amused him to see his daughter enjoying herself. I had been battling with a London season, and was tired, and Alfred insisted upon my coming away with him early. The next evening there was a Court ball and a Foreign Office dinner, which he had to go to in his gold-embroidered Minister's Court dress, very tight, hot, and uncomfortable. I saw him start, and went upstairs to dress for dinner. Then in what seemed quite a short time, I heard his voice again on the stairs. ' Come down here,' he said, and I knew at once something untoward had happened. Alfred was lying on the sofa in the drawing-room in acute pain. I got his coat undone, felt convinced he had appendicitis, and telephoned for the doctor. By the time he came, Alfred was certain that he

was suffering from an attack of the same kind he had when he was a boy. It was not a case of appendicitis, and the doctor ordered poultices and medicines and a nurse and waited three or four days. But he got no better, though he was able to read and to see a few people. On the Saturday night he was so ill that early next morning Dr. Parkinson and Dr. Watson Cheyne decided that there must be an operation.

The moment this was said, Alfred seemed to know that it was the end. When I had made all arrangements with the doctors, I went back into the bedroom and found him sitting up. He asked for a pen and paper to make his will. 'You mustn't be frightened,' he said; 'one has to be ready, and this is a big affair'; also he went on, 'I should like you to send for Lucy, and I want to see some holy man.' I telephoned for Lucy Cavendish, and asked the Dean of Westminster to come and see him. Then I went and sat beside Alfred's bed, and he spoke to me about our life together and all that it had meant to him—unforgettable words, drawn from the depths of his heart and in the light of a clear vision. I could not speak to him: I had to keep control and to act for him. I arranged a little table with flowers, and Dean Ryle administered the Holy Communion, Mary joining in the Service.

He saw his sister Lucy, and felt comforted by her nearness; something of the child in him reached out to her, and he asked her to pray with him. Mary Drew also came, and then at twelve o'clock he walked down the stairs for the last time. I took



him up to the nursing-home, and stayed with him till the last possible moment. Just as he said good-bye to me his eyes filled with tears pressed up by his dear heart. 'It will be all right, Alfred,' I said; and he smiled and answered, 'I shall be as jolly as possible as soon as I get up there,' meaning the operating-room. . . .

The operation was a horrible one; he had had an internal abscess, probably brought on by that blow from the cricket ball, of which he did not speak till the doctors asked him. But they found a bad state of things, so bad that they declared he could not have gone on much longer in any case.

He suffered terribly all through the next five days, but he was never impatient or uncontrolled; his consideration for his nurses, for all about him, was wonderful. He insisted upon knowing what was wrong with him, but was not told of his acute danger. He spoke to me of his experience: 'It was very curious, after the operation, I could not disidentify my body from yours and Mary's; when you were resting I felt I was going to get well, when something was done to me I felt it didn't matter if . . .' I could not catch the rest. He went on, 'I knew you had had an awful shock . . . I knew it. . . . Was Oliver a comfort to you?'

Each day he asked me to read the psalms to him, and now and then a poem. He realised how many people were watching anxiously for news of his illness, and he loved their flowers. I told him Mr. Lucy, the East African hunter, was in London. He opened his eyes and said, 'Mind you give him

a good time.' But he could not talk at all. There were moments of hope all through the week, but on Friday he was unable to fight any longer. About six he suddenly asked that the children should be sent for. And then he spent the next hour or two seeing all the people he loved who could be summoned: his sisters and brothers, and others.

His narrow white bed was tilted up so that he lay looking out into the room; the July sun was just off the house by then, and the windows were wide open, while the light fell upon some of the beautiful flowers which had been sent in masses every day to gladden his eyes.

Edward Talbot read prayers with him, so too at his own request did Edward Lyttelton. To each one of them he spoke little words of love and gratitude—to Charles for all he had been to his younger brothers; to Bob, very characteristically, 'Don't let them make too much of the cricket ball—just a piece of bad luck'; to the doctor, 'It's been a rough passage . . . I've made a good fight, haven't I?' Mary Drew wrote of her own parting: 'After the kiss Alfred said in a voice charged with meaning, "Your father."—"You mean the way he bore his sufferings?"—"Yes, oh wonderful." D. D., speaking of the battle he had fought so gallantly, said to him, 'If any of us should be called upon to suffer too, because of you we shall bear it with infinitely greater courage.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mary Drew continued, 'Afterwards his words, the last spoken in public only a fortnight earlier, came to me: "Learn to win without undue triumph over your opponents: to lose well is as good as a win."'

Once or twice he said, 'I'm afraid Arthur is not coming.' But Arthur Balfour did come, and they took farewell of each other, Alfred in words expressing the long friendship: 'I don't mind so much now it's come to the point,' he said finally; 'I should have liked ten years more, that's all.'

His voice was stronger than it had been at any time in his illness; his spirit seemed to go out to all who were there, and for the last time to show his love and understanding. He said good-bye to his children; to me he only said good night, but words were not necessary between us.

He asked in a pause, 'Is there any one else here?' as if he would have liked to see others too. He welcomed them all with his own sunny smile, said something characteristic and individual to each one—held, in fact, his last little gathering of friends—and then sank gradually into a quiet sleeping. Shortly before he was unconscious he suddenly said, 'One little note full of joy.' . . . We read to him almost till the last moment, feeling that it might soothe him . . . at the end his breathing simply stopped. . . . I held my breath. . . . I longed to see, to hear, something except the struggling dawn and the twittering birds. But there was nothing; he slipped quietly away. . . . 'Vale, vale, dilectissime.'

. . . . .

Alfred's body was buried in Hagley churchyard on the 8th of July 1913. It was a beautiful day, the old church which he had loved was full of

flowers, and many people came to stand by his graveside.

The University match was being played at Lord's on that day ; at the right hour the game was stopped, and all the vast concourse stood uncovered for a few moments as they thought of him.

St. Margaret's Church could not hold half the people who tried to join in a last tribute to his memory. Those who took part were sensible of the vibration of a great emotion in the church, which represented the sorrow and the sympathy of a whole generation.

In the House of Commons the sorrow was universal. A member wrote :

I never saw such widespread evidence of simple love for a man. The deaths of not a few would come as a shock in the midst of their careers, but there was a note of intimacy about this grief which was unmistakable. For me the House will no longer be the same place.

A great personal friend went to the House of Commons after 'that wonderful service in St. Margaret's, where one was impressed by the amazing width of the circle of his personal friends,' and wrote :

I felt his presence in a most wonderful way, and I think I shall always feel the influence of his splendid character as long as I remain here. . . . So delicate was the touch, that few people will have realised till he is gone the immense influence which he exerted over all his friends, but the influence will last for all of us who knew him and will be passed on to our sons, whom we should all like to see growing up in the pattern of such a model.

The Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith, on July 8th, in spite of his own personal emotion was able to express in beautiful words something of the love and admiration in which Alfred's character was held :

It would not, I think, be doing justice to the feelings which are uppermost in many of our hearts, if we passed to the business of the day without taking notice of the fresh gap which has been made in our ranks by the untimely death of Mr. Alfred Lyttelton. It is a loss of which I hardly trust myself to speak, for, apart from ties of relationship, there had subsisted between us for thirty-three years a close friendship and affection which no political differences were ever allowed to loosen or even to affect. Nor could I better describe it than by saying that he, perhaps of all men of this generation, came nearest to the mould and ideal of manhood, which every English father would like to see his son aspire to, and if possible to attain. The bounty of nature, enriched and developed not only by early training, but by constant self-discipline through life, blended in him gifts and graces which taken alone are rare, and in such attractive union are rarer still. Body, mind, and character—the schoolroom, the cricket field, the Bar, the House of Commons—each made its separate contribution to the faculty and the experience of a many-sided and harmonious whole. But what he was he gave—gave with such ease and exuberance that I think it may be said without exaggeration that wherever he moved, he seemed to radiate vitality and charm. He was, as we here know, a strenuous fighter. He has left behind him no resentments and no enmity : nothing but a gracious memory of a manly and winning personality—the memory of one who served with an unstinted measure of devotion his generation and his country. He has been snatched away in what we thought was the full tide of buoyant life, still full of promise and of hope. What more can we say ? We can only bow once again before the decrees of the Supreme

Wisdom. Those who loved him—and they are many, in all schools of opinion, in all ranks and walks of life—when they think of him, will say to themselves :

This is the happy warrior, this is he  
Whom every man in arms should wish to be.

He had stood for all that was pure, chivalrous, and high-minded in the England of his time, and when he went it was more this which men remembered than his versatility and his charm. There was a note of triumph in the sorrow, the triumph that a life had been nobly lived and nobly ended, that a spirit had won through its great ordeal and was free to pass into a new and wider life.

Salute the sacred dead,  
Who went and return not ! Say not so ! . . .  
We rather seem the dead, that stayed behind.  
Blow trumpets, all your exultations blow !  
For never shall their aureoled presence lack.  
They come transfigured back,  
Secure from change in their high-hearted ways,  
Beautiful ever more, and with the rays  
Of morn on their white shields of expectation.  
LOWELL.





## APPENDIX



## APPENDIX

THE following articles appeared at the time of Alfred's death and are reprinted here. They each add some colour to the picture, and should be preserved :

### AN APPRECIATION BY LORD CURZON <sup>1</sup>

‘ Home is the sailor, home from sea,  
And the hunter home from the hill.’

Little more than three weeks ago Alfred Lyttelton appended his initials to an appreciation in these columns of his friend and political colleague, George Wyndham, suddenly cut off by a cruel and inscrutable destiny in his prime. Who could have foreseen that, before the grass had had time to spring again on the grave of his dead friend in the Wiltshire churchyard, the hand that penned the tribute would itself be cold in death? The mind reels before a tragedy so blind in its happening, so inexplicable in its significance, so paralysing in its effect.

This time the victim has passed the fiftieth milestone of life, which the other had barely reached. He is in his fifty-eighth year. But he is a man in the zenith of his mature strength, superbly endowed with physical excellences, healthy, most temperate in all things, abounding in every variety of manly grace and vigour. He comes of a famous and masculine stock, of which he was not the least noble representative. He was playing the game of which he was in youth and early manhood one of the foremost living exponents only ten days ago, and playing it with all the

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted by permission from *The Times*.

ease and power of a master, when he received the blow that was the approximate, though not, it is believed, the ulterior, cause of his sudden prostration. Such is the physical aspect of the tragedy.

Picture in the second place a statesman high in the councils of his party, a Cabinet Minister of the past and of the future, a man immersed in the business of Parliament, equally respected by both parties, fresh from debates in which he had gained great distinction as the sincere and impassioned champion of the Church of which he was a devoted member.

Lastly, conceive a man absorbed in every sort of social and philanthropic activity, beloved and indispensable in every class and sphere in which he moved—and his house was one of many mansions—exhaling an atmosphere of sunlight and irresistible affection about him, a happy husband, an adored father, an attached brother, a prince of friends. Imagine such a one stricken down in a moment as though by a thunderbolt from on high. What can the tongue find to say, what can the heart feel, in face of such a catastrophe? The column broken, the thread snapped, the bright light extinguished—no image or metaphor is adequate to describe the awful abruptness of the shock; no words can do justice to the pathos of the situation.

The writer of these lines has known Alfred Lyttelton from boyhood, and has been intimate with him in every phase of a many-sided and romantic career. At Eton the famous and popular athlete is the hero of his contemporaries. But no athlete was ever quite such an athlete, and no boyish hero was ever quite such a hero, as Alfred Lyttelton. The sight of him smiting the cricket ball to the boundary with lightning-like play of wrist, or snapping it in his gloved hands behind the stumps, or again dribbling the small Eton football at headlong speed down the Field, and shouting as he ran, or again scoring stroke after stroke in the Racquet Court or the Fives Court, lingers for ever in the memory of those who recall it. It was a magnificent exhibition of youth in its strength and beauty.

Later on, when he captained his 'Varsity Eleven, or played in Gentlemen *v.* Players, or for England *v.* Australia, or when he became the finest amateur tennis player that our generation has seen, his achievements gained a world-wide reputation and he was a darling of the crowd. Abandoning these games as he grew older, he became a first-class game shot and a passionate lover of golf, though he started the latter game too late in life to attain the highest rank. It would probably be true of him to say that no Englishman in the past half-century has had so unique a faculty of excelling in every form of sport, or practised it with so gay a mien, or turned it so entirely to the enjoyment of his friends as well as of himself. He was as much adored by the so-called professional as by his brother amateur, by his dependents as by his equals, by the gamekeeper as by his shooting host.

But let it not be thought that it is as an athlete alone, or even primarily, that Alfred Lyttelton deserves to be remembered. At Eton and the University he was one of those whose intellectual powers and moral authority endeared him to his elders and teachers as well as to his contemporaries, and gave him an influence that was neither squandered nor ever used save for good. No man was anything but the better for knowing Alfred Lyttelton. If his summary is even now being written up in the Book of Life, the recording angel will find it hard to know where to drop the obliterating tear.

When Alfred Lyttelton passed from the University to the Bar, he worked as the colleague of some who were then or have since become renowned, and of all of them he won the lifelong attachment. Particularly was this true of the late Lord James of Hereford, for whom he 'devilled' and acted as private secretary while he was Attorney-General, whose feelings of regard and admiration for the younger man knew no bounds, and whose biography the latter, with a piety half filial and half fraternal, was engaged in writing. His legal judgment was sound, his manner persuasive, his address courteous; and although he did



not capture, and perhaps would not have won, the highest prizes of the law, his forensic career was prosperous and distinguished.

At the age of thirty-eight he entered Parliament. He made no great mark by his early speeches, though these were cultured and well expressed. But, acquiring and winning confidence as he progressed (for he was a singularly modest man), he grew steadily in Parliamentary stature until it was amid expectant assent that, upon Mr. Chamberlain resigning the Colonial Secretaryship and Lord Milner declining to accept it in 1903, he was promoted by Mr. Arthur Balfour, one of his oldest and most intimate friends, to the vacant office. Of his conduct as Secretary of State, and more recently as a leading occupant of the Front Opposition Bench, your political biographer has already written, and that aspect of his work need not be noticed here. He was the hero, or at least the central figure, of one famous Parliamentary episode when, in the expiring year of Mr. Balfour's ministry, he endeavoured for the space of an hour, with perfect composure and admirable good temper, to address a House of Commons one party in which was resolved, for interested reasons that had no reference to himself, to listen to no one but the Prime Minister. The writer of these lines happened to hear his last speech in the House but a few weeks ago, when he stated the view of the Front Opposition Bench on the Marconi episode with equal fair-mindedness and ability. The illustrated papers of last week depict him—a charming figure—addressing the great demonstration in Hyde Park on June 21st against the Welsh Disestablishment Bill. He was on particularly friendly terms with the Labour members, who recognised his genuine interest in the welfare of the working classes.

But those who shared his intimacy will turn to other and more sacred things. They will recall his successive marriages with two remarkable women—the first, one of those ethereal emanations that sometimes flash for a moment from the unseen and disappear again into it, leaving a sense

of wonder and enchantment that till the end of life creates a thrill in the heart of every one who beheld the spectacle ; the other, who survives him, gifted in no ordinary degree, the devoted and inspiring comrade of his joys and cares. They will remember his brilliant conversation, aglow with intellectual ardour, stimulating and easy, masterly in its delineation of character, its pursuit of an argument (for he had the lawyer's love of a friendly disputation), and, when he was telling a story, in its imitation of gesture and tone. From the treasure-houses of the past will rise up in the memory of some of them happy walks arm-in-arm, or talks late into the night, when a man felt that he was in the company of a brother even more than of a friend. Such will know how deep was his faithfulness and how sure and tenacious his affections.

All will remember his endearing manner, that seemed almost to partake of the nature of a caress and was equally captivating to age and youth, to high and low, to women and to men. They will see again the sparkle of his merry eye and hear the shout of his joyous laughter. They will picture once more the virile grace of his figure, loosely knit, but eloquent of sinews and muscles well attuned, his expressive gestures and swinging gait. They will measure the quality of his mind, moderate and well-balanced in its inclinations, emphatic but not censorious in its judgments. They will think of his high and unselfish character and of his honourable and stainless life ; and, as he passes into the land of silence and becomes a shadow among shadows, they will reflect with a lifelong pride that they knew and loved this glorious living thing while he shed a light as of sunbeams and uttered a note as of the skylark in a world of mystery, half gladness and half tears.

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A FRIEND'S APPRECIATION <sup>1</sup>

*To the Editor of 'The Times.'*

SIR,—The tragic death of Alfred Lyttelton has struck a note of personal loss in so many hearts that I ask your permission as an old friend to add a few words to your sympathetic notice of him.

Stricken in the fullest vigour of life, the victim of an accident in the sport which through his dash and proficiency had endeared him to thousands, with a fine career before him and a limitless circle of friends around him, it is hardly possible to realise that his gallant spirit is at rest. In his boyhood he was the idol of his co-temporaries. Probably since games were invented and the votaries of various sports became numerous and assiduous, no one individual has ever excelled in so many, and of the large family of athletes of which he was the youngest he was *facile princeps* in every physical contest.

For seven years the mainstay of his school and university at Lord's, he developed into the best wicket-keeper in England, and in the early Australian contests was one of the few Englishmen who played Mr. Spofforth's lightning deliveries with zest and confidence. His advent to the wicket, with his great driving power, was like a fresh breeze to the spectator, and many a half-beaten team was nerved to victory by his cheery optimism. Strange indeed is the fate which links his funeral with the Oxford and Cambridge match.

At Eton he was the finest football player of his day, both in the Field and at the Wall, and those who underwent a charge from this thirteen-stone man, who had won the 100 yards, did not require much further exercise that day. Champion of rackets and fives, as he afterwards was of tennis, he became president of 'Pop' and the Literary Society, besides being in Sixth Form, and he delighted to

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted by permission from *The Times*.

feel that in one examination, which involved thought rather than learning, he beat the whole school.

To two generations of Eton boys he was what Lord Roberts was to the Army, or what Gladstone was to the devout Scot of the eighties. In 1875, when at the end of the summer half he was laying down his innumerable offices, he observed playfully, 'Only forty-eight hours between me and insignificance.' The thirty-eight years which have since elapsed have not dimmed his fame.

Alfred Lyttelton owed his success in the exacting spheres of the law and politics to his frank and generous nature, his high ideals, and his singular power of getting the best out of all those whom he met.

Deprived of his father under pathetic circumstances a few months after he left Eton, he found himself with small means, and with no striking aptitude for money-getting, but where others had to rely on push and self-advertisement, his sunny temperament and universal popularity carried him through the early years of discouragement.

Even as a junior his power of gauging the bent of the chairman of a Parliamentary Committee or of Quarter Sessions scored him many a success, and in the sombre atmosphere of the Parnell Commission he rescued an unfortunate Oxford don who had been cited for contempt of Court from the scathing censures of Lord Loreburn by assuring the Court that Mr. Reid was only suffering from the incapacity common to his countrymen of not being able to see a joke. In later years he was much sought after as an arbitrator, an appropriate rôle for a man who loved to assuage difficulties among friends in private life. In Parliament he was a thoughtful, at times forceful, and always interesting speaker. His mind was naturally averse from the extreme party groove, though he was capable of supreme indignation against opponents, especially in the face of unfair methods of conduct or controversy. Unlike many of those playing a leading part in public affairs, he never allowed fatigue to efface his bonhomie, or intolerance to narrow his sympathy.

The great trouble through which he passed in 1886 enabled him to show that he could meet cloud as well as sunshine with a manly heart and a Christian spirit. To few men after the lapse of years came a more perfect reward.

He had not an enemy in the world, and those who knew him in trying moments, either in the field or in less healthy contests, will testify that he not only raised the reputation of an unequalled band of brothers, but that the roll of those who

Never turned their backs, but marched breast forward,  
Never dreamed though right were worsted  
Wrong would triumph,

will be incomplete without the name of Alfred Lyttelton.  
—Yours, etc. MIDDLETON.

A memorial tablet was placed by the members of both Houses of Parliament in St. Margaret's Church, Westminster, with the following inscription written by the Master of Trinity, Dr. Montagu Butler :

TO THE MEMORY OF

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE ALFRED LYTTTELTON, K.C., M.P.

Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1903-1905

At Eton, at Trinity College, Cambridge, at the Bar

In the House of Commons

A Man greatly beloved

In youth by his rare athletic grace and skill

His name had a charm for thousands of his countrymen.

His manhood, enriched by vigour of mind,

By largeness of heart and by noble manners,

Presented as was finely said on a memorable occasion

‘An ideal to which every English Father would  
wish his son to aspire.’

Born 7 February 1857—Died 5 July 1913



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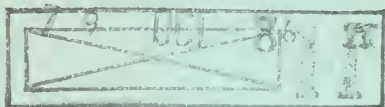






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